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Implications of student involvement for administrative decision-making in a house system.

Theresa Williams Yeldell
University of Massachusetts Amherst

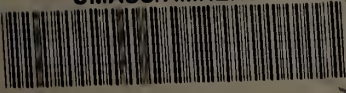
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IMPLICATIONS OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING
IN A HOUSE SYSTEM

A Dissertation Presented

By

THERESA A. WILLIAMS YELDELL

Submitted to the Graduate School of the
University of Massachusetts in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

SEPTEMBER 1985

EDUCATION

Theresa A. Williams Yeldell

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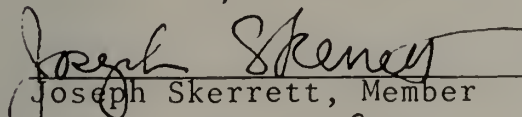
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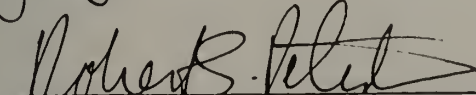
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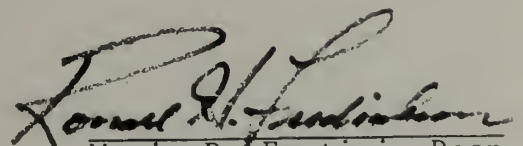
Approved as to style and content by:


Atron Gentry, Chairperson of Committee


Richard J. Clark, Member


Joseph Skerrett, Member


Robert S. Peterkin, Member


Mario D. Fantini, Dean
School of Education

ABSTRACT

IMPLICATIONS OF STUDENT INVOLVEMENT
FOR ADMINISTRATIVE DECISION-MAKING
IN A HOUSE SYSTEM

September 1985

Theresa A. Williams Yeldell, B.S., Northeastern University
M.Ed., Antioch College, Ed. D. University of Massachusetts

This study involves the development of a systematic procedure for gathering information from and perceptions of high school students about issues of fairness, availability and accessibility of help and the expectations and interaction among students and adult personnel within a House System structure. The information received should provide the administrator with a framework for student involvement in administrative decision-making relative to House activities, policies and procedures, and curriculum. Additionally, this study begins to provide a means for communication and accountability between the House Administrator and students. The exchange of ideas and planning for implemen-

tation of these ideas lend themselves to cooperative interaction and positive role modeling with students in a supportive environment. The methodologies used - survey and interview - prove to be manageable vehicles for engaging students in meaningful ways while maintaining the sensitive balance between adult authority and student activism. The implication is that what students feel and think are important and, once expressed, their feedback will have an impact upon the type and way decisions are made relative to their school lives. Prerequisite to this, or any model of student involvement in decision-making to succeed, is the concept that students be consistently made aware of the realities of their right to be included as well as their responsibility to participate, now on the school level, and later as adults in society. The study seeks to identify options, at the high school level, for making decisions about educational and social issues with the assistance of students as opposed to mandating behavior. It implies that decisions that involve controversial ideas need not be unilateral or only by consensus of the adult participants within the House. The smaller structure of a House System allows for a more concentrated interaction between administrator and student when attempting to communicate and exchange ideas.

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C H A P T E R I

INTRODUCTION

General education should concern itself with those shared experiences without which human relationships are diminished, common bonds are weakened, and the quality of life is reduced... In short, it should concentrate on those experiences that knit isolated individuals into a community.

Delineation of duties, responsibilities and abilities are supported best by informed participants. Lines of communication will enable and encourage coordinated verses disjunct efforts. Education is or becomes a community function, with learning and growth taking place on every level of involvement.

Boyer and Levine, in their discussion of general education, identify areas of learning as the study of symbols, (language, the arts, and mathematics); membership in groups and institutions, (political, religious, familial, educational, economic); production and consumption, (interdependence, vocations, careers); relationships with nature, (the universe, responsibilities, liabilities); time, (relationship of then, now, and tomorrow, when is as important as what); and common values and beliefs, (how formed; impact, decision-making).²

Education, and in this case, public education, is a barometer for societal climate. If studied closely, a school can forecast. A school and its students reflect the

past and present experiences and attitudes of our society.

What has been emphasized and filtered down or translated to the individual can be seen in the actions of that individual in his/her attempts to maneuver in society. The level of a student's understanding of society is determined by the quality of the education each student receives and is indicative of what we can expect of the future leaders and decision makers.

The future is indeed in the hands of those students who are here, now. It is the right of youth to expect sound educational guidance and it is our responsibility to a) provide the necessary tools, (b) encourage positive, creative, and humanistic attitudes, and (c) be the role models and help build the foundations for continued maintenance of society.

Through its structural organization, its instructional procedures and its extracurricular activities, the larger school needs to ensure that all its students participate actively and acquire a genuine sense of attachment and contribution to group goals. There is a temptation in a larger school to concentrate upon extracurricular goals and standards which can be achieved by only the³ most talented students at the expense of the rest.

Perpetuation of the political, economic, and social systems are contingent upon the level of competence of a given population and how that population interprets its needs and capabilities. As we move toward the future, there is a need to evaluate where we have been, are presently, and wish to go in public education.

Tyack and Hansot (1982) describe the historical emergence of American public education, in the context of leadership, in three phases. The initial role of public school leadership was the institutionalization of the Protestant, Anglo-Saxon goal to shape "a Christian Nation."⁴ Between 1890 and 1954 the "corporate society"⁵ era saw as its charge the reshaping of public education so as to limit public participation in educational decision making while encouraging the professionally trained leader using the business or corporate management model. The third phase examines the fragmentation of educational leadership and confusion about educational goals that was brought to the forefront in the 1960's and has persisted today.

In the last fifteen to twenty years there has been a succession of rebellion, renaissance, resistance, revitalization and recovery in education. We experienced: an increased emphasis for college and post high school training; programmatic and curricular development that began to focus on meeting the needs of school clientele; a sense of political concern, economic support and encouragement for educational growth and improvement. The educational mood changed, and public sentiment reflected the anxieties and frustrations of society. The work ethic (hard work + good education = a job, happiness, acceptance), had not become a reality for more and more people.

Such national traumas as the Vietnam War, assassi-

nations, Watergate, ghetto riots, and the oil squeeze have altered the perceptions and expectations of Americans and dashed hopes for peace and prosperity shared by all.⁶

The urban classroom for today's teacher/practitioner has been likened to a stagnating environment, wherein little or no comprehensive educational activity occurs for teacher or student. In the face of increased pressure upon political arenas to hold the line on, or roll back the cost of educating our youth, the educational sector is at the mercy of a seemingly unsympathetic and uninformed public.

It is not enough to say that public education is at a standstill, or that people in general have lost faith in the ability of having a public education make a difference in their lifestyle or future. There may well be a considerable case for the present regression and decay. There are reams of information available, critiquing, measuring and defining the problems besetting the American educational system. Most of the information was probably generated to warn, inform, or convince some segment of the populace of the need to become proactive and creative around the survival of organized public education.

"Today the only certain people are critics who know what is wrong with public schools."⁷

There is a need to get a clearer picture of the present and a realistic view of the future and to try to make both relevant/relative to where proponents of public education

want to go. "An institution like public education gains coherence not only from organizational forms but also from the social meanings that people attribute to it."⁸

The present condition of many urban school systems is a synthesis of poor public image or support, diminished public financial capacity, judicial entanglement, political interest and intervention, poor accountability and distribution of power and resources.

A basic understanding of the existing organizational structure affecting public education would include a working knowledge of its components.

The political base, is composed of a Mayor and a specified number of School Committee or Board of Education members elected for a predetermined length of time and charged with determining fiscal appropriations and policies for the educational system. Union negotiations and hiring of personnel are also functions of the School Committee or Board of Education.

Central school administration, consisting of the Superintendent, Assistant Superintendents or Deputies, Program Assistants, Personnel Department and Supervisory personnel, develop the mandates of the School Committee with regard to the line staff and pupils. Pupil registration and assignments may also be determined at this level.

School-based administration: this group includes the Headmaster or Principal, his/her Assistants, Curriculum

Chairpersons or Directors, District personnel, House Administrators or Deans. Responsibilities at this level deal with student and staff supervision, program development and evaluation, day-to-day management of the individual facility and parental involvement. Teacher and support staff are the classroom practitioners, specialists in subjects and special needs, Guidance and Adjustment Counselors, Aides, Security personnel and parents. This group deals with students in a variety of situations; both academic and social concerns and parental involvement on the individual school level.

It would be naive to believe that the caring, well trained, conscientious educator could reverse the trend in public education without the concerted efforts of the previously mentioned components. All of these groups however, impact upon students.

The student body is an active-passive component/population of the system. Students are talked at, about, and around. More often than not decisions are made for them with little or no regard for the students' ideas, feelings, preferences or objectives. And yet, by some magical formula our youth are expected to emerge enthusiastically from their educational cocoon, confident and prepared to bolster and embrace humanity and our society.

The topic area of school climate, including issues of student, staff, and community involvement and alienation in

the educational setting, has captured the attention of political and educational forums. The usual political arena for this discussion is the School Committee or Board meeting. As an elected or chosen body, its sphere of influence encompasses the schools' organizational structure, policies, procedures, budget and staffing. Educational forums also include informal conversations in teachers' rooms and classrooms, supermarkets, union halls and professional organization meetings.

The need to address student, staff, programmatic, and management issues on the public high school level, has led to a number of changes in approach in the delivery of educational services. There are numerous changes taking place in the philosophy and structure of the American educational system. The impact of, and rationale for, many of these changes are yet to be seen in an historical perspective because there is still a feeling of uncertainty regarding the "state of the art." Educators are now sifting through the many reports introduced by commissions and research committees relative to the state of public education in America. State and local policy-making boards have placed education on their agendas for priority attention. There is not yet consensus about the direction or focus to be taken to resolve the issues of school climate and student alienation.

The proponents of interdisciplinary and sequential

curriculum design have reinforced the need to have clarity and consistency of course content.

At least 350 major approaches to dealing with psychological growth and some 3,000 effective exercises and techniques have been identified. But the effective-curriculum developer still needs some structures, models, or organizers that will help him to plan for specific outcomes that can be clearly communicated to all concerned; that will help him to focus; that will help guide his selection of appropriate materials and procedures from the overwhelming number of alternatives that are now available.

Technological growth and development have helped to shape the organization of educational services. The social milieu of our schools, whether natural or court-ordered, has dictated concepts of multiethnic and multiracial perspectives previously omitted and ignored. Socioeconomic changes in American society have given rise to increased responsibilities for child rearing and child development on the part of the school. Issues of working parents, social disorder as evidenced by the diminished impact of the church, Scouts and volunteer organizations, single-parent homes, as well as matters of conscience (racism, sexism, religion) have brought about change in the delivery of educational services.

Given all the various sources of impact and influence on educational settings, it is important to realize that the greatest degree of influence will probably be at the level of direct services in the individual school building. The introduction of new or different appro-

aches, methods, or modes of operation in education is usually theoretical at the school board level, but practically applied at the local school building. One trend has been a revision of management within schools, with an emphasis on operating larger schools while maintaining the small school personality. One approach being used is the House System.

Statement of the Problem

The introduction of the House System as an organizational form at the local school level was an attempt to address increasing student enrollment. In 1913, Dr. David McKenzie initiated subgrouping at the Detroit Central H. S. in Michigan. The House System was used in Brookline H.S. in Brookline, Massachusetts in 1933 and has grown to accommodate 500 students per House. The form of House System most often used on the public secondary school level today differs greatly from the original system used in England and Canada, or as adapted by Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. The eight residential Houses at Harvard were founded by A. Lawrence Lowell with the aim of developing the moral character of students. The House is "the center for social and cultural activities, academic tutorials, extra-credit seminars, lectures and discussion tables."¹⁰ Each House operates around a specific philosophy that includes some type of goal of moral social

ization. In addition, each House provides room and board for about 400 students and is an autonomous administrative unit regulated by a council of House Masters. Almost all undergraduate students are required to live in a House until graduation. In 1961, Michigan State University adopted a similar philosophy. There are eight self-contained academic-residence halls functioning as living-learning units. Cypress Junior College in California instituted a House Plan, without dormitories, in order to decentralize all services and create a more personalized environment for students. Although some literature is available about the House System in the United States, the bulk of information focuses on the Canadian and English experiences. The non-residential versions of the House System are more closely aligned with those used at the public school level in the United States.

These houses may be organized on a random basis across grade levels, alphabetically across grade levels, strictly by grade level, or even by the philosophy of a particular house, i.e., open campus versus a structured or closed campus.

The House structure usually incorporates the basic curriculum areas of language arts, mathematics, social studies and general sciences. Other subjects - physical education, home economics or subjects needing special space or equipment - are usually serviced by common facilities and may also require intermingling of students from various

houses. Characteristic of most House Systems is the decentralization of administration. House administrators, counselors and teachers are identified as a cooperative unit. The current literature on the American modifications of a House concept does not deal with student perceptions of the House System and how, if at all, it addresses perceived needs of students. Similarly, the literature does not present methods for evaluating the effectiveness of the House format with regard to Administrator and staff or Administrator and student relationships. Although the House System has been in operation in this country since the early 1900's, there has not been an extensive study of its educational value, impact and implications as a management tool.

Cambridge Rindge and Latin School has invested time, expertise, and funding into a management structure that will hopefully service its educational community in a manner that complements its unique social and academic commitments. There is an opportunity now to begin to look systematically at the Cambridge experience from many perspectives - - in this case, from the student point of view.

Purpose of the Study

The objective of my initial inquiry was to better

understand the shape and scope of the House System as it was being implemented in adjacent or surrounding communities as compared to my own experience with the House System. My prior observations of the House System as a management structure focused on its use in the Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, public schools. Having been a Housemaster in both systems, my perspective has been shaped by experiential as well as objective information.

My preliminary findings on the implementation of the House System in these communities did not identify common educational rationales for the use of this structure. The common motivating force was to find a more efficient and effective way of managing large numbers of students in a single facility.

- People learn as they live, those who live in a democracy learn to operate democratically; those who live in an autocracy learn to operate autocratically. Insofar as is possible, schools in a democracy should operate democratically.
- Boundaries are needed. Every community of individuals (including schools) needs limits. In a democratic community, those limits should be set by those who are part of that community.
- Leaders lead. Even in a democratic community, someone is in charge. It's always healthier if people are honest about the authority they possess and don't play games of participation with those who have less authority.
- There is no monopoly on wisdom. Problems are best solved when all competent and informed people pool their insights.

-Students are people. Like the rest of us, they are more likely to support and implement those decisions in which they have had a voice.¹²

One approach toward "humane management" introduced in the New England area in the early 1930's was the House System. The basis for this method of management organization was founded on its use in the Colleges and Comprehensive Schools in England and Canada. The House System, as it was used at Junior College, London, was an attempt to make school life a complementary rather than an antagonistic experience for students. The need arose from student disenchantment with, and overall depersonalization of, the "Megalocampus."¹³ The size and scope of higher education was overwhelming for students, many of whom were unable to cope with the stresses of everyday living in a competitive educational environment. There were few supports or motivational opportunities for those less capable of adjusting to the rigorous demands of college life. However, at no time was there clear indication of a relationship between student needs and goals and House management or structure. Some of the literature alludes to the philosophical justification of a student-centered management structure. Summaries of studies by commercial, industrial and community groups conclude,

"there is consistent evidence that as size, that is, number of persons, of the unit increases, punctuality, attendance, identification with the group, and other indexes of participation, decreases."¹⁴

However, there is a dearth of specific methodologies or evaluations of implementation. It was not possible to ascertain a level of validity for using the House System over any other form of school structure as a method of limiting student alienation. My focus shifted from an investigation of the House structure to its impact upon the students involved in this form of administrative management.

The purpose of this study is to develop a framework for student involvement in the organizational structure of one House unit at C.R.L.S. It is important to get some idea of the amount of information students have about House administration and of their perceptions about their role within that structure. An analysis of this information should give the House Administrator a clearer understanding about the type of information students have about the House System, about how the House operates, and about areas of student concern which should be explored.

The primary goal of this study is to develop a process through which the House Administrator can obtain better information from students and the possible modifications to House structure that will lead to more student oriented decision making. A questionnaire was distributed to students in House B eliciting their perceptions of issues of fairness, availability and accessibility of help, and adult-student expectations and interaction. Students were also

asked to identify areas of concern and needs for change relative to the three topic areas. The information gathered may be useful as part of an operational framework within the House.

My interest in this mechanism is as a House Administrator who is extremely concerned about the views, opinions, and perceptions of students in my House and the degree of student involvement in decision making activities within the House. There is little opportunity for the House Administrator to speak with each student individually about issues and ideas. Group discussions and impromptu feedback sessions tend to focus on specific concerns in crisis situations. There is a need to reflect upon the year's experiences and to put them into perspective before continuing current activities or procedures. The learning-teaching dynamic should be interactive so that the adults, and, in this case, the administrator, may grow by virtue of this exchange. I would prefer to make informed decisions and be able to introduce procedures based upon the real, as opposed to the hypothetical, attitudes, outcomes and opinions of my students. Administrative decisions that affect the day-to-day educational environment of students can be made with the assistance of students, and can foster permanent channels of communication between students and House Administrators.

Rationale and Significance of Study

Prior to 1960, the greater society, either by choice or circumstance, made the assumption that the American system of education was successful. As a whole, schools were not being scrutinized or held accountable for achieving specific goals. Public complacency and acceptance were bolstered partly by the sense that everything must have been going well if there was not an audible outcry from "responsible" sources. Industry was being supplied with an ample labor force. Colleges and universities were receiving scholars and scholarship funds. The average American parent neither questioned nor doubted the relevance of his or her child's educational experiences in public school (Dressel, 1976).

The curriculum lag was discovered with the launching of Russia's Sputnik in the 1950's. The National Defense Act of 1958 was initiated to bolster public education. Science and Mathematics curriculum became the important components of quality education. Federal money for educational innovation was made available for research and development. The Russian launching of Sputnik unmasked the academic facade, while the Civil Rights Movement illuminated the social and moral conscience of Americans. Media technology placed all of these issues on the international as well as national menu.

The Elementary and Secondary Schools Act, (E.S.S.A),

of 1965 for urban areas received federal funds and national attention. The urban poor became known as the disadvantaged (culturally and academically). The problems of the 1960's were 1) with the student - not the schools, therefore compensatory programs for remediation were developed, (Project Head Start, Upward Bound, Higher Horizons) 2) More money was equated with better and 3) only educators knew what to do especially administrators. In the late 1960's early 1970's Vocational Education, Special Education, Adult Education, and Early Childhood Education programs were added. The changes of the 1970's dealt with decentralization of power, institutional reform, different as in new educational approaches and; joint educational decision-making involving (parents - students - and educators).

The high school functions on the principle of adjustment: you will adjust, or you will suffer the consequences. The student is recognized only when he deviates from the norm, either negatively or positively. The undistinguished "C" student, however, graduates without ever having crossed the threshold of the principal's office.¹⁵

Human relationships are alienating when people are treated as objects or standardized abstract units, ...when people are manipulated to serve the objectives of others; and when high mobility and specialization in the society prevent people from developing affectional and moral bonds to a community.¹⁶

The above statement, if altered slightly, could well be a rationale for the way some school systems, including Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, have attempted to address the needs of students and staff, and, more direct-

ly, management issues on the high school level. Prior to school desegregation, Proposition 2 1/2, (a Massachusetts tax cap enacted in 1981),¹⁷ federal grant reductions and other impacting phenomena, less attention had been given to the relationship of good school management to school atmosphere and climate, or to student, staff and community alienation in the educational setting.

"The Canadian Secondary Schools House and Governance System" was designed to encourage student involvement, provide increased personal counseling, and satisfy some student needs for decision-making regarding their education.¹⁸

The earlier literature regarding the House System suggests that student needs were of foremost consideration in designing and implementing the plan; however, more recently the focus has shifted toward managerial needs with regard to the larger size of buildings and staff issues, with pupil services as a secondary rationale.

Despite the current tendency to overlook human relations values in the search for ability groups amenable to a single-lesson presentation, many communities are "discovering" that they can capitalize on the equipment and staff of a large school without paying a price in lowered morale and poor human relations.¹⁹

Examples of this attitude are most readily found in the districts where new school construction has been preceded by educational input regarding design and function. North Hagerstown, Maryland; Riverview Gardens, Missouri;

Royal Oak, Michigan; Glen Head, Long Island; and Fairfield, Connecticut; are some of the areas that have made strong commitments to the House System. The oldest known building specifically constructed for a House System in the United States was built in Cleburne, Texas in 1918 for high school students.

A new facility is not a prerequisite for the House System although it certainly allows for greater flexibility and planning. Rather the emphasis is placed on the variety and quality of services to students and staff as the result of a smaller unit of organization. Student and staff interaction is not exclusive by House since most schools cannot afford to duplicate common areas such as the cafeteria, gymnasium, library, and auditorium. This is seen as a positive outcome, and allows for socialization and growth outside of the House.

In Cambridge, the House B Administrator is interested in encouraging student involvement in house management and in academic and social or extracurricular activities, as well as providing the appropriate support services needed. If House B students share these goals, how best can they be realized by the administrator? To what extent will students be active participants in the planning and implementation stages?

Definitions

1. House System: For the purpose of this study a House

System is an administrative format consisting of defined physical perimeters and a specific group of students and teachers. It is designed to operate as an entity within a larger school setting with a designated administrator.

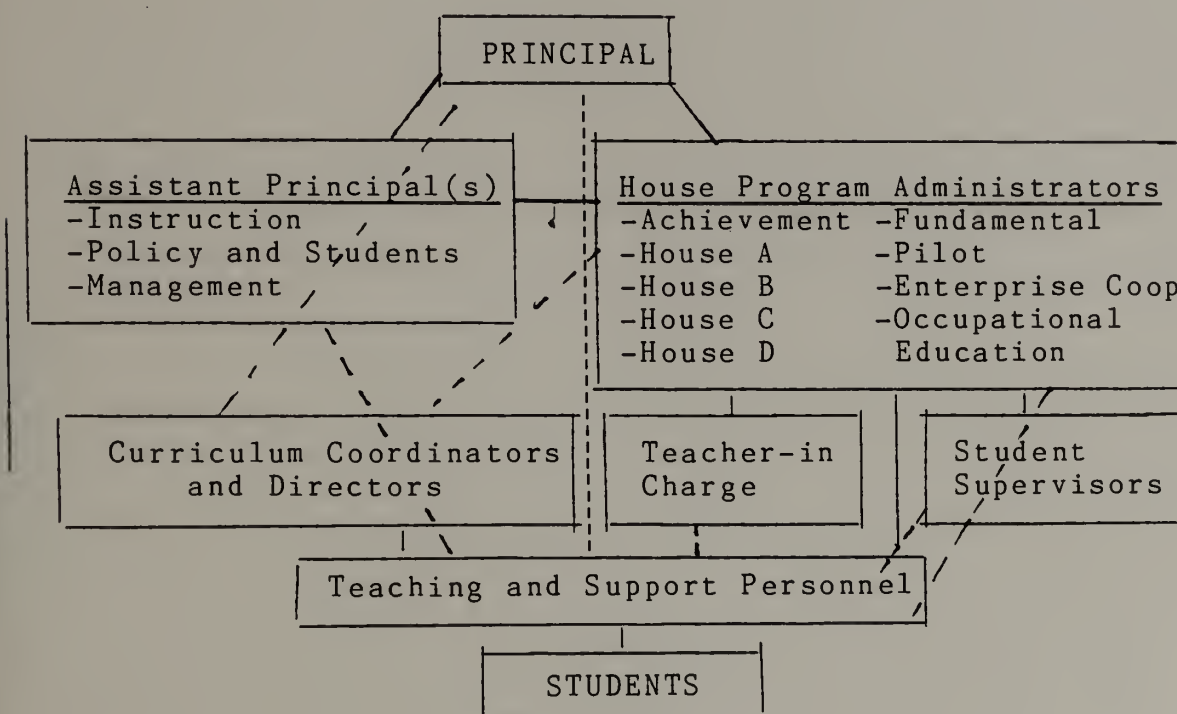
2. Housemaster: The designated administrator responsible for the day-to-day management of student and staff population assigned to a specific House. Also called House Administrator.
3. Educational Environment: The physical and social surroundings of a school.
4. School Community: The people and properties that directly and indirectly influence the educational environment--businesses, social service agencies, political organizations, parents, students, and school personnel.
5. Headmaster: Also may be called the Principal. The person overseeing the entire physical and academic structure of which the House System is a part. (See table 1).
6. Social Climate: Also referred to as the School Climate. Describes the overall "personality" and atmosphere of the educational environment as it relates to human interaction around school policies, practices, expectations, norms and rewards.
7. Teacher-in-Charge: A teacher on assignment for the

purpose of assisting the Housemaster. The TIC does not teach classes and is responsible for those duties or areas designated by the House Administrator. At Cambridge Rindge and Latin School the TIC serves a three-year term.

8. Student Supervisor: Serves as an assistant to the House Administrator primarily for verification of student attendance and supervision of study hall and detention.

TABLE 1

Organizational Structure of the House System at C.R.L.S.



Assumptions

Basic to this study is the assumption that the

political and economic pressures that exist related to funding public education will continue to exist and place budgetary restriction upon school systems. New construction of schools, levels of employment practices, and materials and services available for use in public schools will at best remain the same and may even decrease. The accountability of school systems as presently judged by student competencies, will continue to be closely aligned to local and federal funding of schools.

The successful school will have as part of its profile the creative, sensitive, and resourceful administrator. More importantly, the school will demonstrate positive communication with, and a sincere respect for, its student population. The development of a responsive vehicle for that communication and for any subsequent altering of the educational environment, is one step toward validating the House System as a viable form of educational management.

A further assumption is that the Housemaster will be committed to student involvement as an important and necessary factor in successful school administration, and in the shaping of the educational lives of students.

...students, through educational growth and maturation, should become sensitized to their own values, constantly re-examine them and attempt to make judgements, accept responsibilities, and enter into activities which reflect and support those values to which they are committed.

Theoretical Positions

The most accurate information to be gleaned from a constantly shifting situation is best received from the participants; those who are acted upon know best how they feel, what they think. Assessing outcomes is difficult. Even more precarious is the interpretation of attitudes, beliefs and values expressed. It is important to find out, firsthand what impact, if any, there has been; it is even more important for this researcher to assess the possibility that a sense of empowerment develops that allows a student to exercise and explore a variety of ideas, concepts, principles or methods for learning.

A questionnaire or interview is not likely to inspire students to take direction or action in their own behalf. However, if but one student is made to think and feel that he/she has an ability as yet undiscovered, that will allow for a fuller growth experience, then there is worth in this project.

This study does not lead one to conclude that students must be at the forefront of every decision that is made in their behalf. It does not conclude that the absence of student participation is to be equated with poor education, undemocratic use of authority, or insensitive administration. It is not an administrative or staff evaluation.

The study does shed some light on how a group of students, given the opportunity to interact with and respond

to an administrator, can have an impact on decision-making.

Limitations

This study does not attempt to compare the leadership styles of Housemasters and Program Leaders or the practices of other Houses within the school. There is no attempt to give a thorough picture of the structure and operation of the "Ideal House System," although student opinion of how a House is administered would necessitate a look at the leadership style, programmatic offerings and general climate of a given House. It was assumed that students would invariably make comparisons between Houses since they are not isolated or discouraged from investigating other programs or Houses at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School.

There are inherent limitations in this type of investigation. It is possible that students had negative feelings about participating in a survey requesting their opinions and views. There may be some question about what relevance such a tool would have in fact. Will student opinion effect change? Past experience may indicate that it will not! It is difficult to separate out the impact of student opinion on administrative action. Therefore, the number of students who were willing to give honest answers and make the effort to communicate without fear of penalty or an assurance that change would occur, is unknown.

The study assumes that students in grades nine through

twelve are sophisticated enough to identify and evaluate House structures, procedures, and outcomes. However, further assumptions about the degree of understanding or assimilation into the House B environment cannot be made on the basis of longevity. Perceptions of the House System as a whole may have influenced the information given during this inquiry. Student movement throughout the school may be varied and frequent so that the student experiences are not limited to the House B environment and staff.

Also of importance are the issues of accessibility of services and availability of information. This brings us back to the amount and kind of "baggage" a given student brings to the situation. Baggage includes previous practices, knowledge and biases. How does one make the distinction between a brilliant student who is non-assertive and therefore does not inquire about or demand assistance, and, the student who is falling through the cracks in the system and is unable or unwilling to call for help?

My initial vehicle to begin the process of communication between student and Housemaster has been the questionnaire. Herein my aim has been to build a sense of shared respect and responsibility for the learning-living environment using the House System as the basic form of organization and interaction.

It is important to realize that meeting children's needs does not mean that adults do not provide structure, expect quality performance, or hold students accountable for their behavior.²¹

FOOTNOTES - - CHAPTER I

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C H A P T E R I I

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

THE ADOLESCENT IN HIGH SCHOOL

Psychological and Sociological Aspects

The intent of this study, simply stated, is to begin to focus as an administrator on the concerns of a specific group of adolescent students and their perceptions about their experiences within their school environment. This study is not aimed at providing explanations for behaviors or attitudes of all students, although there will be some attempt made by the author to understand and interpret the opinions given by House B students in order to develop an action plan for addressing student concerns. This position is based on prior attempts to send to students the message that there is a receptiveness and commitment on the part of the House Administrator to continue to recognize students as an important constituency in House B. Student concerns, as described by Weinstein and Fantini, are the basic sociological and psychological drives of students for positive self-concept, connectedness and relevance. The significant socio-psychological growth attributed to the adolescent or pubescent period is less obvious than the physiological stage, but no less important.¹

Kohlberg, Dodson and others discuss moral development as a series of stages or processes which ultimately lead to moral value judgements and principles, such as concepts of self, justice or equality. Dodson, Polsky, Simpson and Brittain build upon this idea by emphasizing the significance of social milieu, peer group, and parents. "...the population composition of a high school has important consequences for the student's aspirations..."²

Educators have been aware of the variables that influence cognitive learning. Many curricular approaches are based upon sets of objectives and outcomes that focus on the developmental levels of the adolescent.

Affective learning objectives have usually been delegated to primary and elementary grade levels or to the more humanistic educational settings found in alternative programs such as Montessori Schools. Because of the many group affiliations of the adolescent - - family, peer, work, student - - there is "no single core status"³ or dominant role whose expectations take priority in directing his behavior and forming his self-image and developing qualities for adult living. The peer group is the testing arena for social skill development; it is where status and identity needs are usually gratified as perceived by the adolescent. However, parents are usually perceived by the adolescent as the more competent role models for making adult choices (Brittain, 1962). It is fair to assume that

students base their choices upon the content of the alternatives offered.

Adults can have considerable influence over adolescent decision-making.

Children whose parents employ a democratic parenting style that involves them in the decision-making process will experience a sense of power.⁴ Similarly, students who are allowed to choose a topic of special interest for their social studies project or who are asked to provide input into how the class is arranged will experience a sense of power.

The socio-psychological importance of the high school environment to adolescents is emphasized by Boyle (1966), Alexander and Campbell (1964) whose studies concluded that educational aspirations and attainments were influenced by the population composition of the school. It is important to note that the degree of influence is also a function of the curriculum emphasis within the school; the hidden curriculum, the academic curriculum, and extra-curricular activities (Boyle, 1966).

Designing academic curriculum requires an understanding of student needs and teacher expectations. As outlined by Jones it is important that students make psychological as well as intellectual commitments to learning. The curriculum therefore, should allow for the incorporation of teacher goals and the academic and social needs of students.⁵

A school curriculum that endorses participation around a variety of issues on a number of levels is on its way to-

ward the positive and active engagement of students. Mackey and Appleman (1983) are especially concerned about what they term "The Growth of Adolescent Apathy" as characterized by students who have no commitment to any aspect of school activity. The increasing number of students entering the work force prior to graduating, substance use and abuse, and apoliticism are described as major causes of disenchantment. They cite evidence that working students experience declines in academic performance and involvement in school. The availability and use of drugs adversely affect the school community and add to apathetic student behavior. Feelings of powerlessness are seen as a result of the less than positive point of view today's youth have of attaining the "American Dream."⁶

Affective Learning

Research is beginning to look at the discrepancies that exist between educational theory and practice. Considerable research has been done which focuses on the teacher-student variables that exist within the school environment relative to high inference behaviors of the teacher and administrator. The adult's expectations for students, fairness, empathy, reinforcement for expected behaviors, reward, and feedback toward students has helped to structure instructional strategies (Johnson, 1981, Borich, et al., 1977).

The importance of affective learning and education lies in the identification of the feelings and emotions of the student and their effect upon how and what the student learns (Weinstein, et al., 1970). In developing a model for the teaching of relevant content Weinstein, et al., concludes:

if educators are able to discover the feelings, fears, and wishes that move pupils emotionally, they can more effectively engage pupils emotionally, they can more effectively engage pupils from any background, whether by adapting traditional content and procedures or by developing new materials and techniques.

As the practitioner goes about the task of identifying these concerns there must be a concurrent effort to develop curriculum with objectives that can be clearly stated, examined and evaluated.

Education in a free society should have a broad human focus, which is best served by educational objectives resting on a personal and interpersonal base and dealing with students' concerns. This belief rests on philosophical and moral grounds, but it also has plainly practical implications in terms of the price a society pays for negative social behavior - - crime, discrimination, tensions, and, ultimately, widespread pathology.

Jones and Jones (1981) agree that a child's unmet needs within their environment is responsible for unproductive student behavior.

They outline Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs: "Self-actualization; Self-respect; Belongingness and Affection; Safety and Security; Physiological Needs (stimulation, touch, nourishment, comfort, pacing)." ⁹ They then suggest three

methods for determining student needs:

- (a) examine theories and research results - not influenced by individual biases and have been time-tested.
- (b) ask the student. An individual is the world's best expert on him/herself. Children basically know better than anyone what factors make them comfortable, productive, and happy.
- (c) systematic observation. Monitoring student behavior in various situations to determine unmet needs.

There are a number of techniques that can be used to help identify student concerns. The "Faraway Island"¹¹ technique developed by Gerald Weinstein deals mainly with identifying significant others, values or criteria used to pick friends and associates. In looking at the "real" in contrast to the "ideal" situations that concern students, the "Ten Years From Now"¹² technique gives insights into perception of power over destiny or the future. This game provides a good method for looking at how to fit pieces of the puzzle together to get from the real (now) to the ideal (future).

Students asked to prepare a "Time Capsule"¹³ begin to get information about self-definition and about the criteria they use to determine what is valuable.

Developing a positive affective learning attitude between adults and students within a House structure may necessitate using a variety of techniques, procedures, and/or methods.

Although all of the above techniques have merit for looking at student concerns, they do not readily lend themselves to anonymity or to ease of administration for a large group. The conceptual basis of my investigation parallels that of Weinstein and Fançini.

The affective curriculum would demonstrate flexibility (adjusting to the individual needs of a school), experience-based learning (direct, purposeful, demonstrative), vertically programmed outcomes (sequential skill development in small stages), present-oriented experiences (emphasis on now as opposed to past and future), concept-building (asking why instead of what - transferability of knowledge), social participation (geared toward doing not just knowing), concepts based in reality (exploring and investigating society and self-concepts), and an emphasis on affective content (stress relevance, look for the concerns of the learner).¹⁴

As an administrator I find it essential to recognize and integrate student concerns, thoughts and actions into the operational aspects of their educational experience. The various methods used to motivate students (and staff) to identify, and become engaged with their concerns may have varying degrees of success.

Knowing the students' attitudes regarding the school environment, including the curriculum, social interaction, rules and procedures, is an essential element for any deci-

sion to change or keep the status quo. Student concerns have to do with fundamental personal and social issues. Categorized, they are concerns about identity, power and connectedness. This study focuses on the use of choice as a means of dealing with student concerns. It aims to help students develop their ability to recognize viable situations for making choices and to explore ways to do so intelligently.

When we speak of helping students acquire the necessary tools to make positive personal choices we must look further than the superficial tools of reading, writing and computing. Another component may well look like "The Trumpet" structure used in the "Education of Self" course taught on the university level by Weinstein (1976).¹⁵
(See table 2).

TABLE 2

<u>The Trumpet</u>
1 Experience - Confrontation
2 Inventory Responses
3 Recognize Patterns
4 Own Patterns
5 Consider Consequences
6 Allow Alternatives
7 Make Evaluations
8 Choose

"The Trumpet was developed by a national group of educators in an attempt to find a curriculum that was more relevant to the basic psychological concerns of children than others in current use".¹⁶

The curriculum deals with concerns of connectedness, self-identity, and potency (power), in a manner that integrates one's awareness of concerns, abstract thought, and conscious action. It is possible that the high school student may not have reached the necessary psychological or emotional development for successful use of such a program. There is room for exploration as an experiential method of dealing with and understanding behaviors (our own and

others) which may lead to its use in the House structure for students and staff.

Peer relationships is one aspect of the Alternative Education movement which has spread slowly into the thinking of practitioners in the public high schools. In pleading the case for student - student interaction Johnson (1981) explains a very interesting dimension of controversy. He proposes that controversy can be used in a constructive manner if managed properly and can, among other things, increase the student's ability to develop and interpret perspectives. He encourages the students' use of cooperative controversy:

the more accurate and complete the communication of information, the more supportive the climate, the more disagreement is valued, the more the open expression of feelings and ideas, the more disagreements are defined as problems to be jointly solved...and the easier it is to identify similarities among positions.¹⁷

Johnson's model/process assumes that the teacher or adult involved in monitoring this activity has been sufficiently trained to feel comfortable with the outcomes.

School Climate

A 1981 Lee County, Florida study involving 31,000 public school graduates reports

"...they learned most when the teacher maintained order in the classroom, provided well-planned learning objectives, set high standards, and provided a sequence of steps to ensure student success at a rapid rate."¹⁸

The school environment/climate ranked high on the list of concerns. Students wanted a nurturing atmosphere and relevance.

The discussion of effective schools has helped to focus attention on the elements within the school building that can have considerable influence over how and what students learn and experience. There have been extensive reports of research conducted over the past ten years. Most studies outlined characteristics of the effective school. Although there is some variation, most of the major studies include the following categories: principal's characteristics and behavior, teacher's characteristics and behaviors, school climate or atmosphere, instructional emphasis, pupil evaluation and resource availability. In his studies of effective schools, Ron Edmonds (1979,1981) identified the necessary characteristics as strong leadership, clear commitment to basic skills acquisition, frequent monitoring of student progress, high expectation of students' minimum performance/achievement and a quiet, orderly environment that is conducive to learning.¹⁹

Although much of the effective schools research from 1970 to the mid 1980's was based upon elementary school studies (Purkey and Smith, 1982), one area of concentration, school climate, has been consistent with later studies done on the secondary level. Murphy, et al., Purkey and Smith (1982), and Rutter, et al., (1979) focused on the secondary

level, concluding that variations in findings greater than those of elementary levels were influenced by the social "ethos" of the high school setting. In a synthesis of Effective Schools research, Purkey, et al., (1982) point out that the significant difference between the elementary and secondary schools may be due to "school composition" rather than "school processes." Firestone and Herriott (1982) describe the dilemma:

Structural looseness is accentuated at the secondary level by departmentalization and increased size. These factors undermine agreement on educational goals and block efforts of secondary administrators to influence classroom management.²⁰

Murphy and others break this lack of school organization down even further, referring to schools as loosely coupled organizations; "...the connections...between school offices and individual classrooms are tenuous."²¹ They cite poor sense of agreement on schoolwide goals; unclear instructional curriculum; high personnel turnover within the school community and lack of professional characteristics as major reasons why principals are unable to influence students or teachers.

It is obvious that there is still room for considerable research and discussion relative to school effectiveness on the secondary level. School climate, as defined in this study, has played a decisive role in many school improvement plans. Supportive evidence cited by Pukey & Smith (1982) suggests that

a cultural approach to school improvement also has the advantage of being equally applicable to elementary and secondary schools. It points to increasing the organizational effectiveness of a school building and is neither grade-level nor curriculum specific. The culture of secondary schools can²² be manipulated to promote academic effectiveness.

The RISE project (Rising to Individual Scholastic Excellence) lists the "establishment of a strong sense of student identification and affiliation with the school,"²³ as one of the essential elements of school effectiveness. Stone and Lutz (1981) attest to the adolescents' need for direction in a world of uncertainty. The school setting is the last "safe" environment for most students before they must assume their adult roles in society. School personnel, along with parents, and students must be ready to become immersed in the ideas of excellence, improvement, effectiveness and success.

...if children are given the chance to make decisions and be contributing participants in school society, they will, through practice and reinforcement, grow up to be better decision makers, and more effective participants in American society.²⁴

D'Amico (1980) stresses the importance of experiencing decision-making, weighing opinions, negotiating and dissenting as ways to foster a sense of self-confidence, responsibility and consideration. Again these experiences are neither curriculum specific nor age specific. The reluctance on the part of some practitioners to engage in student decision-making activities suggests that the research is being ignored or has not been convincing enough.

Fear of experimentation, fear of loss of control or power, lack of motivation or maturity of students-any or all of these may signal the need for prolonged discussions and training with teachers and other adults within the school.

Educational Alternatives

The move toward educational diversity was born out of the high level of frustration with the public school system's inability to function for all people using one structure of organization.

During the early 1970's school improvement efforts had made little significant change in a failing institution. Quality education for the masses was not being achieved through updating of curriculum, remediation programs, team teaching and programmed learning techniques.

The alternative education movement was a reform movement that began, during the 1960's and the civil rights struggle, with the "freedom schools."²⁵

For many blacks and whites alike, the freedom schools provided a glimpse of alternative programs tailored to their perceived needs, which included sympathetic adults working with children, curriculum specifically geared to the self-determination concerns of black people, and involvement in the immediate political life of the community.

To pursue these educational concerns, those involved departed from established procedures by assuming a flexible stance that advocated expanding the boundaries of schooling to include the community and its resources, establishing smaller units to humanize the experience for those involved, and relating educational experiences to the life of the community.²⁶

The counterculture movement stressed the development of new learning environments that focused on individual and group lifestyles. The overriding concerns were with individual freedom to choose the developmental structure best suited to the individual. John Dewey's progressive education philosophy was also influential during the alternative education era, stressing academic exploration and experiences in an open, more informal classroom structure. The idea of educational diversity does not herald the demise of public education, nor does it negate the traditional educational philosophy. Alternative education is a concept of choice that does not necessarily serve as a replacement for the system that has been compulsory for many people, especially those unable to afford private schools. The voucher plan of choice in use in a number of communities in the United States including Rochester and New Rochelle, New York, and Alum Rock, California could conceivably pose a threat to the public schools, especially the inner city schools of decaying urban areas. The reality of a working parent having the time, resources, and ability to investigate options for his/her child(ren) prior to redeeming the voucher leads me to believe that this system would only add to the level of frustration being experienced now.

The voucher approach was first advanced in the 1960's when public schools were being criticized for poor quality. It has resurfaced in the last several years as once again falling confidence in public school has

fueled enrollment increases in non-public schools.²⁷

Critics, legislators and teachers' groups in particular, see tax voucher systems as a threat to public education. They fear a loss of financing by the municipalities if the use of vouchers is encouraged.

Massachusetts, Minnesota, Colorado and Tennessee are just a few of the states that are facing legislative discussion around the issue of vouchers. One seemingly positive impact of the voucher plan (and other non-public education proposals) has been the surge of activity by public educators to begin to look seriously at the possibilities of alternatives within the public school framework (Fantini, 1973).

The expanse of literature and research covering the topics from "Why Public Schools Fail?" to "What Makes an Effective School?" has generated controversy and contemplation in the educational community. As has been the case for many years, educators have taken a defensive stance in response to the questions (Williams, et al., 1981). Educators are exploring the theoretical constructs of their profession in search of answers for dilemmas that sometimes defy understanding.

An article written by a California high school teacher discusses the need to revamp the educational model. He sees the top-to-bottom industrial-model of educational management as totally outdated and obsolete.

School managers find themselves in the unfortunate position of having to manage by traditional approaches that simply don't fit current realities. Inappropriate decision-making models give rise to misguided decisions-and confused relationships. 28

The crisis situation has driven many educators and educational analysts to argue for the dismantling of public education as we have known it, and to investigate alternative educational approaches.

The "public-schools-of-choice system" described by Fantini (1970) uses existing educational alternative models and offers ideas for developing new options. Using a set of agreed-upon objectives for learning, the options could range from a nongraded progress oriented model to a restructuring of the existing program to a specific educational process such as diagnostic prescriptive learning. The limitations would be determined by the amount of creative ability in the educational community involved.

The mini-school philosophy stresses flexibility within existing structures by redesigning space and creating new curriculum. One important element is the use of street workers as supportive liaisons between students and the system. New York City schools have incorporated this model with reported success. Blending the best of school and community produced the "schools without walls" concept that originated in 1968 in Philadelphia, making use of the city's cultural and professional institutions as learning environments.

"Education by Choice" is the program title for the Quincy Senior High II (Quincy, Illinois) alternative schools' effort "providing several routes for students to attain common educational goals."²⁹

Another example of alternatives at work in an urban environment is the "School Improvement Project."³⁰ SIP was conceived by Ron Edmonds in 1979 while working as a consultant with the New York City school department. The participating schools were a representative, voluntary sample of the city's schools. The project was based upon the effective schools research and an organizational development theory, adopted by the system, which stated

new or innovative practices are most likely to be successfully adopted by organizations, such as schools, when members perceive the process of change to be one of local initiative and self-improvement.³¹

This is the second decade of decentralization for New York City schools. There is considerable hope that the alternative programs operating throughout the system will continue to grow and improve. In 1973, twelve separate alternative programs (in Community School Board District #4) began as an experiment geared toward various student interests, serving students in grades K through 9, to provide options for students, teachers and parents. The curriculum areas ranged from sports, performing and fine arts to science, mathematics and mainstreaming of special education students.³²

The process used to develop these types of schools and programs lends itself to the type of creativity, dedication and willingness to achieve needed to promote the positively functioning House System.

Throughout the many phases of planning, assessing, implementing, evaluating and maintenance there was no indication that student input was solicited or included. The plan does successfully include crucial elements for introducing organizational change at the school building level. These elements include attention to the needs and conditions of the school, internal coping mechanisms, emphasis on autonomy and independence of the program and a shared commitment from major school constituencies.

THE HOUSE SYSTEM

Philosophical and Sociological Rationales

As mentioned earlier, the literature on the House System does not address specifically the student perspective on the levels of accomplishment resulting from this form of management. There are a convincing number of reports from school administrators that speak in terms of student needs and methods used to address those needs, but most of them fall short of an assessment of goal fulfillment or evaluation by students.

The bulk of information falls within two major cate-

gories. The first area deals with the philosophical and sociological rationales for the House System. This includes a genealogical report by Evans who attempts to trace the introduction and development of the House System in the United States. The accounts of Finch³³ and Brown,³⁴ in an article entitled "School Counselling and Pastoral Care," refers to the House System in England and Wales. They emphasize the development of self-direction and explore the role of the counselor. Yanchus³⁵ speaks of avoiding the "factory syndrome" associated with large facilities, through architectural planning as a means of addressing the social, psychological and academic needs of students. The manipulation of school life to affect personal development in a positive way is the key to unlock what Bullen³⁶ calls the "hidden curriculum" or values education. His recent article about the social versus academic climate is based upon research done by John Wilson at the Farmington Trust Unit in Oxford, England. The importance of school climate is further emphasized by students polled at Cleburne High School in Texas, who overwhelmingly endorsed the use of the House System although it is homogeneous by sex. The main reason given in support of the system was that of individual and group counseling benefits. There seemed to be a sense of belonging and loyalty among students.³⁷

Research by Vreeland and Bidwell focuses attention on

the student by evaluating the correlation between student values and attitudes and the specific goals of a House. Their findings emphasize the importance of staff-student relationships and peer involvement in setting goals, for the individual as well as the group. Role models and student choice influenced the affective climate and were central to changing or influencing the values and attitudes of students.³⁸

The role of the school climate is discussed further by Dierenfield.³⁹ He urges a closer look toward the use of the House System in American schools. His studies of the House System used in the English Comprehensive Schools dealt predominantly with organizational structure and student staff relationships.

His 1976 status report concluded that the House System as it is used in Comprehensive Schools in England does not solely provide the "strong pastoral care" intended for three major reasons.

The first is that often the house system is operated in conjunction with other types of school organizations and they handle many functions which the house would normally assume. The second is the (varying) commitment of headmasters/mistresses to the house system. Thirdly, the difficulty of trying to maintain house operations in cramped or poorly designed facilities militates against the theory behind the concept.⁴⁰

What is interesting throughout this category of literature is the consistent reference to the importance and

need for personalization of the educational setting. There is equal emphasis on student-adult interaction and their resultant relationships. That is not to say that because it is a recurrent theme in the research that the House System is in fact the only organizational structure available to deal with the perceived needs of students. It does, however, make a strong case for exploring the model as an option for school communities.

Martin⁴¹ Leyden⁴² Walker⁴³ Neville⁴⁴ and others have shown that there is no patent answer or structure that fills and fits all situations. They have explored the House concept on the college and junior college levels and found that, in fact, it is not necessarily suitable for all types of students; that the concept of "total" education of the student can threaten the norms or roles and raise controversial issues about respect, competence, privacy and diversity. Some institutions view the House System concept as a coping mechanism aimed at dealing with increased enrollment. Their perspective is not without merit. Certainly the growth of regional high schools and larger comprehensive high schools has had implications for organizational structure and development. Larger physical plants and greater student populations have made school administrators and staff members look more closely at the House System model as a form of management, control and coping.

Dierenfield (1976) reports that 69+% of the student

sample attending comprehensive schools in England using the House System, would keep the present system without change or modification. This was striking considering the results reported in the same study relative to student attitudes about pastoral care and the house leaders. Only 23+% felt a strong interpersonal link with the house leader. Help with personal problems and school problems scored 6+% and 31% respectively, indicating little, if any, assistance given to students.⁴⁵

The relationship between student and house-master/mistress and tutor could not be characterized as generally close or trusting in either matters of personal or educational concern. From the pupil viewpoint the house system, as found in this sample of comprehensive schools, does not involve them extensively in activities other than sports and does not furnish them with a place to take problems to.⁴⁶

Another study that begins to look at House System participants was done by Davidson⁴⁷ at Cypress Junior College in California. The Davidson report compares and contrasts individual Houses with regard to physical facility and student-faculty interaction. Student perceptions of the House System were measured by observing student behaviors as well as by interviewing students at the College and recent graduates. The results clearly show the House concept to have a positive effect upon school climate.

Institutionalization/Applications of the House System
Concept

The second category of literature deals with the "How to...." or mechanics, of the House System. It seems to have become clear to many public school systems in America that they were not going to be able to carbon copy the English or Harvard University House System model. In fact, some school systems had no real knowledge of the historical background for the use of a House System. As with fashionable trends, word-of-mouth about The House System concept has caused its spread as a model. Proponents used professional meetings and publications to describe their particular use of House Systems in colleges, junior and senior high schools across the United States. These accounts tend to offer firsthand information and experiences.

Peterson,⁴⁸ the Principal of a high school using the House System, modified as schools within-a-school, speaks in favor of its personalization and positive academic appeal. He feels that students and teachers are enabled to spend quality time together in a smaller group setting. He views the fight against the factory image as the difference between quantity or numbers and a quality academic and personal relationship for student and teacher.

Although dealing primarily with a Junior High School modification of a House System in California schools, Taylor and Cook⁴⁹ agree that there is a more personalized

and quality environment for students and teachers. Again, there is no indication as to how the writers reached their conclusions.

Still, it is possible to begin to look at the House System in terms of its modern application and begin to formulate some hypothesis about its educational worth. Kraegel⁵⁰ gives a good synopsis of the House System as used in a high school specifically designed and constructed to operate under a House organization. By linking the structural information together with the philosophical ideas that favor recognizing the role of the students and others in shaping and participating in their educational growth, one can generate firm support for the ideas expressed by Gentry, et al.,.

At both levels (elementary and secondary) the most important ingredients for maximizing training are intellectual honesty, willingness to learn and adapt, and a respect for the students' individual experiences and beliefs.⁵¹

FOOTNOTES - - CHAPTER 2

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C H A P T E R I I I
CONTEXT OF THE STUDY
A COMPARATIVE STUDY

Through previous research, the author attempted to get an overview of policies and procedures being implemented by other public school systems in and around Boston and Cambridge, using the House System model. By comparing the development and practice of the role of Housemaster, it was possible to make some general conclusions about the future potential of the House System and its administrator.

A survey was distributed to eleven Boston Public High Schools, Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, and three public high schools outside the Boston-Cambridge area. Of the schools contacted, data was returned by Cambridge, Boston (eight schools) and the three outside schools. Personal interviews and visits were also made using the survey. (See Table 3).

Institutionalization

Designation of Housemasters' duties and responsibilities was overwhelmingly at the discretion of the Headmaster, although 50% of the Housemasters had varying amounts of input with regard to job function and procedure. Thirty-three percent (33%) of the job descriptions

TABLE 3
SCHOOLS CONTACTED

1. Boston High School, Boston, Massachusetts
2. Brookline High School, Brookline, Massachusetts
3. Jeremiah E. Burke High School, Dorchester
Massachusetts
4. Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, Cambridge,
Massachusetts
5. Durfee High School, Fall River, Massachusetts
6. East Boston High School, East Boston,
Massachusetts
7. English High School, Boston, Massachusetts
8. Hyde Park High School, Hyde Park, Massachusetts
9. Jamaica Plain High School, Jamaica Plain,
Massachusetts
10. Liverpool High School, Syracuse, New York
11. Madison Park High School, Roxbury, Massachusetts
12. Mario Umana High School, East Boston,
Massachusetts
13. Medford High School, Medford, Massachusetts
14. Newton North High School, Newton, Massachusetts
15. South Boston High School, South Boston,
Massachusetts
16. West Roxbury High School, West Roxbury,
Massachusetts

**Schools participating in survey: 2,3,7,11,13,14, and 16
Schools participating in interview: 4,7,8,11,13, and 15
Schools visited: 2,5,7,8,10, and 13
Survey non-applicable: 1 and 6

were decided by School Committee, Director of Personnel with input from the Headmaster, or Superintendent of the school district. In Boston, the Housemaster receives the same salary as she/he would be entitled to if she/he were in the classroom on a full time basis. The other systems have separately negotiated salaries which differ from that of a teacher.

Screening procedures for the position fall into two basic categories. In Boston the Housemaster position is an appointment made at the discretion of the Headmaster and usually not open to personnel outside of the specific school involved. Conversely, the schools outside of the Boston system advertise and screen system and non-system applicants.

Half of the responding schools have at least four (4) full-time House Masters. The other half ranged from one (usually called a Dean of Discipline) to six positions. In the school organizational structure, 50% of the respondents are ranked third administratively. In most cases the Housemaster is in a parallel position with Department Chairpersons and both positions report initially to an Assistant Headmaster, and then to the Headmaster where requested or necessary.

Duties

Staff supervision is a designated duty for 67% of the

respondents. Supervision ranges from informal discipline and classroom management situations to responsibility for evaluation of non-tenured teachers and curriculum review. The latter is usually done in conjunction with the Department Chairperson and Headmaster. In one case the Housemaster is responsible for 50 teachers in five different departments, while in another situation the Housemaster is dealing with the teachers in his House area via the Chairperson and only with regard to how the teacher manages the students in class. At the other end of the spectrum, and predominantly in Boston Public Schools, supervision of staff by the Housemaster is limited to support staff such as aides, clerical personnel, or substitute teachers. In some cases, a Housemaster deals directly and exclusively with student services and discipline as it relates to structure, classroom attendance, lateness, lunchroom and administrative assignments. Boston Housemasters noted that they are in a very precarious position because of the informality of the position of Housemaster and are therefore uncertain or unclear about the contractual legality of peer supervision.

At present, most schools involved in this survey find a great discrepancy between house identity as it was designed and as it in fact operates. Students identify with their Housemaster for services and resources, but as a whole, individual houses have not developed strong person-

alities. Houses are distinguished by colors, location, letters, numbers, proper names, or any combination of these designations.

Crisis intervention and management of the school facility are considered the most important functions by the Housemasters, followed by student conferences, teacher referrals requesting additional student support services, and supervision of staff. There is total agreement that discipline is the area in which over 75% of the daily activity is spent, in conjunction with the responsibility of insuring a smoothly functioning area, unit or building.

Given the varying student, staff and facility responsibilities, the Housemasters are convinced that their job is necessary and vital to the day-to-day functioning of their schools. Whether the job was permanently appointed or was at the discretion of the Headmaster does not affect how a person regards his/her operational importance within the school as Housemaster. The professional image that exists among students and staff with regard to the Housemaster is somewhat different in that most "outsiders" feel that Housemasters are serving in a limited and mundane capacity. The Housemaster is viewed as the disciplinarian by students and teachers.

Regardless of job security and definition or lack thereof, there are some areas of similarity in the day-to-day execution of duties. Primarily, each Housemaster oper-

ates within the limits of an established Code of Discipline which regulates student behavior. In 60% of the cases, the Code was compiled with direct input of the Housemaster and other members of the school community (Headmaster, students, teachers, parents). The Code provides guidelines for sanctions and procedures to be used by the Headmaster or designee when dealing with disciplinary issues. Without specifying the offense, the disciplinary procedures most often used by the Housemaster are: suspension from school, in-school suspension, conferences, detention, closed campus, restitution, and expulsion. Housemasters unanimously reported that they exercise almost complete autonomy with regard to decisions relative to student discipline.

EVALUATION AND TRAINING

Evaluation procedures for the position of Housemaster in the Boston system have not been formally established. The absence of a uniform job description is considered the major reason for the lack of written evaluation criteria. An informal assessment of performance is given by the Headmaster. According to 50% of those surveyed there are no evaluations specifically designed for the position of Housemaster and job performance is measured by feedback from staff, students, and parents informally, by diminished numbers of student incidents, and by personal satisfaction in the job. Only in two cases were there structured evalua-

tions developed by the Central School Administration. The Cambridge system provided a more formal assessment by the Headmaster, using the diagnostic-prescriptive model of goal setting and observation, similar to that used for teachers.

Seventy-five percent (75%) of those responding had been teachers in their present school before becoming a Housemaster. When asked what abilities they considered to be most important for a person in this position, the results were as follows:

Human Relations Skills.....	83%
Good Judgement.....	33%
Counseling Skills.....	25%
Patience.....	16%

Eight percent (8%) of the responding Housemasters felt that leadership skills, energy, appearance, sense of humor, strength and academic background were important traits or abilities. The ability to seek out and make use of community resources such as courts, businesses, clinics or alternative educational opportunities was mentioned as an important adjunct to the Housemasters' function. Training and development of these and other administrative skills is largely a matter of self-motivation. Periodically, there are administrative team meetings, in-service courses and seminars or workshops that Housemasters attend. Overall, attendance is voluntary. A number of respondents participated in the William Glasser program, "Schools Without Failure."¹ Madison Park Housemasters participated in work-

shops prepared by the Brookline High School Housemasters in the initial year of the House System at Madison (1977) and later were part of a summer seminar and problem-solving workshop.

On-going training opportunities are seen as a priority need for continued and improved job performance by 67% of the Housemasters. It is presently being provided in one case. Four (4) respondents did not consider it a necessity at all.

Major dissatisfactions reported primarily involved working conditions. There is great concern about the lack of clarity about the position among peers. The demanding nature of the job does not allow for time to do future planning. There is a need to develop ways to deal more positively with all students and not just those with problems. Housemasters seek improvement in their roles as they relate to the development of educational curriculum and supervision of teachers. Housemasters see the need to develop more efficient procedures to minimize the emphasis on discipline and increase the time spent on educational leadership and classroom management skills with teachers. Indications are that Housemasters would be interested in an ongoing exchange of information and ideas.

This survey did not touch upon all areas of concern with regard to the position, duties and effectiveness of the Housemaster or the House System. It did, however,

elicit some perspectives and attitudes that may be useful in future development of the role of Housemaster.

ONE BOSTON MODEL

The House System at Madison Park High School, in Boston, was initiated by the Headmaster and introduced as a new organizational structure to be implemented at the beginning of the 1977-1978 school year. Madison Park would be moving into its new quarters and it would have a new management style geared toward small units of operation within the larger format for 2,500 students. The facility would encompass six buildings, a student population bussed in under the Federal District Court Desegregation Order,² a staff of 150-200, and a Magnet Program.

The primary emphasis at Madison Park is to help students develop the Basic Skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. A core program of basic skills courses allows each student to work at his or her present level of mastery, and to further develop his or her skills in these areas...In accordance with the school policy of flexible scheduling and individualized programs, a concerted effort is made to match students in all subject areas with courses that meet their particular skills, needs and interests...Music, Media & Communication, and Theatre & Dance are the three major magnet themes at Madison Park. Within each of these themes, sequential courses are offered to develop the students' abilities and their awareness of careers related to the individual fields of study.

To create a more familiar and supportive setting for the students, the campus is organized in a "house" system. Students are assigned to their house by homeroom location. The

two class-room buildings, known as the Red Building and the Yellow Building, are subdivided into four "houses." Each house is run by a Housemaster and a Guidance Counselor who service students' administrative counselling needs. Two Assistant Headmasters coordinate all house activities and³supervise instructional and support services.

The role of Housemaster offered a vehicle by which to implement my objective of providing more individualized assistance to students while projecting a positive role as a person and administrator. In a role not officially recognized as an administrative position in the Boston Public Schools, I was afforded the opportunity of defining and shaping the position of Housemaster into a viable means for addressing student, staff, parental and educational needs and goals. All of this, and more, was expected without adequate staff support or authority for implementation. In retrospect, the mandates of the Federal Court Desegregation Order of 1975, Central Administration requirements and other constraints were actually what I call "positive-negatives." They forced me to be creative, strong, consistent, and flexible. There was a constant need to draw upon inner strengths and personal experiences and abilities in order to maintain a positive outlook for myself as well as the students and staff I supervised. It was necessary to search out, define, redefine, and test my own truths, biases, values and impressions and to develop ways of reflecting and transmitting useful attitudes and information to

students and staff.

One of the strikingly formative aspects of my role at Madison Park was the need to develop clear and efficient lines of communication. The enormity of the six-building campus, with a student population of approximately 2,500 students, grades nine through twelve, from every section of the city, required me to develop effective ways of acquiring and disseminating information. In a given day, a verbal or written inquiry by a staff person could easily require the following activity:

- a) a message to the student or parent relating the nature of the problem or inquiry.
- b) student-Housemaster conference to discuss the problem or inquiry.
- c) a student-teacher-Housemaster conference to attempt reconciliation.
- d) a student-teacher-Housemaster-parent conference if the problem was not resolved sufficiently by previous steps.
- e) referral of student and/or parent to a support service person or agency, if necessary.

Regardless of the intervention used to resolve the problem or inquiry, a written report was usually required stating the outcome and necessary follow-up. That report was given to all participants concerned.

Meetings became one of the best vehicles for communi-

cating ideas, feelings and needs to people. Other Housemasters had similar problems and concerns and were accountable to Assistant Headmasters and the Headmaster; therefore, it made perfect sense to meet consistently to discuss issues.

The organizational structure of the Boston Public Schools on the high school level is led by the Headmaster as the responsible building and program administrator. Next in line of authority is the position of Assistant Headmaster. The Department Heads in charge of specific curricular areas such as language arts, mathematics, or history are primarily responsible for teacher supervision and program of study. At Madison Park High School the introduction of the Housemaster as a management position was not meant to supersede the established administrative structure, but to allow the Headmaster to designate some responsibilities for student and teacher needs. In order to coordinate the activities of each level of administration, weekly meetings were held to share information and propose alternative methods and solutions.

The meetings built on another aspect of the job--that of trust. Some people might consider it consistency of behavior, in that all Housemasters were requested to act and react with relative similarity. In practice, people did what they felt most comfortable or justified in doing; it became increasingly important that we all be able to

"trust" each other's ability to say and do what was generally best for the students and to be open to critical thinking. Our meetings became supportive work sessions.

Because of the unofficial status of the position, the Housemaster usually fell prey to odd jobs or ad hoc assignments. Housemasters relieved some of the overflow that existed for guidance personnel and departmental curricular people. Students and staff identified with their House in some ways, and yet the dependence of staff and students upon the House System rarely happened along House lines. Instead there was a building affiliation. The academic and homeroom classes were located in the Red or Yellow building rather than in Mr. or Ms. XYZ's House. Allegiances usually flourished because of building affiliation and proximity.

Three years and hundreds of students later I seemed to be experiencing a sense of stagnation and hopelessness. Although the position had been installed in a number of high schools throughout the City of Boston, there was little or no visible support for legitimatizing the House System or Housemaster to a point where both were recognized as management options within the school system. Madison Park could not measure the impact of the House and Housemaster concept largely because of the informality with which it was viewed by the school community as a whole. In fact the number of Housemasters was subjected annually to the availability of funds and not based on school-defined needs.

THE CAMBRIDGE MODEL

Across the river, at what has been dubbed the "educational center" of the United States, is another somewhat sprawling city high school that parallels Madison Park in many ways. Cambridge Rindge and Latin School (CRLS) is the conglomerate of two public schools and four individualized programs, resulting from an energetic reorganization plan implemented in 1977 by the Superintendent of Schools and School Committee. The school community is politically aware and philosophically astute and somewhat more like a suburban than urban populace.

The House System in Cambridge arose with reorganization. The position of House Master was implemented as a bonafide administrative position with basically managerial functions. It was designed to be autonomous with direct line responsibility to the Headmaster. The position requires specified educational background and preparation. Applicants are interviewed and accepted by a broad-based screening committee(s), and are hired to perform administrative duties. There is not, to my knowledge, an historical or factual basis for the manner of operation of the House System at CRLS, although it is similar to other House Systems with regard to structure and level of responsibility. The general rationale for this and other plans is for smaller, more manageable units within large schools, while

maintaining the educational or academic staff and material benefits (books, equipment). In addition to four basic houses (A,B,C,D), there is a Fundamental School, a Pilot (alternative) School, The Occupational Education Program, the Achievement School, and Enterprise Co-op, all of which operate within the High School with modified House structure.⁴

Alternative Programs

The various alternative programs are described as follows in the CRLS Course Catalogue.⁵

Enterprise Co-op

Enterprise Co-op is an alternative career oriented program for dropouts and potential dropouts. The program is unique in that it involves student-run businesses. A woodshop and extensive food services are operated in an atmosphere that simulates the real business world. Students receive shares in the co-op based on their productivity and their dividend checks reflect the increase or decrease in profits for a particular pay period.

The academic curriculum relates directly to the students' business experiences. In addition to a standard curriculum of English, math and social studies, students also participate in and receive credit for their contributions to decision-making meetings at which policies and problems are addressed. The emphasis in all aspects of the program is on increasing the student's self-confidence and personal growth and development.

It is anticipated that, after one year of participation in Enterprise Co-op, a student will be prepared to re-enter the mainstream high school program, or to secure entry level employment in a career of his/her own choosing.

Fundamental School

The Fundamental School is an academically intensive alternative program...The program stresses academic excellence and student accountability, and enlists parental involvement and support in rein-

forcing the discipline code. The Fundamental School curriculum emphasizes not only basic reading and math skills but also a broad foundation in science and humanities. Thus, each student is required to take the courses prescribed in the Fundamental Core Curriculum.

Occupational Education

Occupational education provides new options to secondary school students - a high school diploma as well as marketable skills in an occupation of one's choice. Although the primary focus of Occupational Education is to graduate young men and women who will successfully enter the world of work, the Academic Program at Occupational Education is structured to also allow students to continue their education after high school.

All students carry a full Academic Program which insures their meeting CRLS graduation requirements. All students also carry a full Vocational Program which insures access to a career at a skilled level.

Pilot School

The Pilot School is an alternative high school program. Its students, grades 9-12, are drawn from all areas of the city. In essence, the Pilot School is an attempt to create a community of students, parents, and educators mutually accountable to each other for the goal, the program, and the successful operation of the school. The principles...focus on the areas which make the school an alternative: the diversity and representativeness of the student body relative to the Cambridge school population, the quality of human relationships within the Pilot School community, the decision-making process in the school, and the programmatic focus on the needs and concerns of individual students.

Achievement School

The Achievement School is an alternative junior high (grades 7 and 8) program for students with special needs (underachievers, disadvantaged, perceptually handicapped) located at the Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. With a maximum of 40 students, Achievement offers intensive compensatory education in the academic areas in order to increase success and proficiency in the basic skills of reading, math, social studies, science and English.

Achievement School students receive basic academics in their own classrooms with Achievement teachers, while the specialized areas of home economics, art, foods and music are taught by mainstream secondary school teachers.

Achievement School utilizes behavior modification and awards system to encourage positive behavior. Achievement teachers have a teacher advisor role which stresses student counseling.

Parents play a large role with Achievement students, and close parent contact is an important factor in achieving social and academic success.

The dynamics of such "mini-schools" is mind boggling. Prior to reorganization, the two high schools operated independently of each other. In addition, the specialized programs were housed throughout the city and were administratively autonomous. In many ways the Pilot School philosophy more closely resembles the original concept of a House System. With the exception of the Fundamental School, all of the alternative programs have smaller student populations; there are entrance prerequisites; students can opt out of the programs for a House assignment (House students cannot enter these programs without prior screening); the program administrators have varying degrees of budgetary and curricular decision-making autonomy. The present organization allows for cooperative interaction among programs and houses under the overall supervision of the Principal. Maintaining the integrity of specialized programs in conjunction with the philosophy of a comprehensive high school requires creative planning and cooperative effort on the part of all administrators. The communications mechanisms are as intricate as the structure, largely because of a still unclear procedural and responsibility matrix. Cambridge has addressed the issue of institutionalization

for the House System and is now in the process of finding the mixture of ingredients that will provide maximum quality services and opportunities for success for the entire school community.

House B Profile

My involvement with the Cambridge Public Schools began in August, 1981 as the newly hired House Master for House B. As with any new environment the bulk of my time and effort for that initial year was spent acclimating myself to the procedures and general structure of the school as well as getting to know the participants -- students, teachers, staff members of House B in particular -- and introducing my organizational style. The second year was a building year, establishing priorities of increased visibility and accessibility to students and staff and of monitoring of student achievement. There were various vehicles developed to serve for communication: weekly meetings with counselors and office personnel; monthly teacher meetings and discussion groups; committee designations on the student and staff level; breakfast and luncheon groups with students; awards and House assemblies; House bulletins and newsletters; all with the purpose of getting a sense of feeling for what was House B.

The overall response from teachers and students was positive, which led me to believe that House B could be

readily engaged and would be amenable to the idea of developing a focused sense of purpose and an organizational framework for implementing those objectives. My involvement began with the largest House B population, the students.

I had now spent three full years with the majority of the House B students and felt that they had had a fair amount of time to form some opinions, ideas and attitudes about me as an administrator; about the teachers and staff members working in House B; about the administrative organization within the House; and about their peers.

The demographic make-up of the House B student body for the 1983-84 school year as in the past was largely determined by random selection by category. In other words, there was an attempt to distribute male-female, minority-non-minority, and varied achievement level students into each of the four Houses. The major exception to this procedure was the placement of the Job Skills and Vocational Training Program students. These are special education programs that provide for students who need a more specialized academic setting because of intellectual and/or physical impairment. They are an integral part of the House B community.

Of the three hundred seventy (370) students assigned to House B when this study was conducted, one hundred eighty six (186) were male, and one hundred eighty-four

(184) were female. At any given time during the school year the numerical population of House B (and most programs) fluctuated by ten to fifteen students due to movement within and outside the school district or programs. The number of students per grade level were:

grade 9	-	111
grade 10	-	87
grade 11	-	79
grade 12	-	80
ungraded		13

The ethnicity at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School is a unique feature for a public city school. Overall, there are at least 50 nationalities represented in the student population. The multiethnic-multicultural milieu of the school is seen as a very positive aspect of school life and strongly supports the idea that students in the various houses and programs should interact by taking courses with teachers and students from other houses or programs.

The operational structure of House B consists of the House Administrator, the Teacher-in-Charge (TIC), the Student Supervisor, two Guidance Counselors and approximately 50 support and instructional personnel. At present, they do not all function exclusively within House B nor deal solely with House B students. Grade nine and ten students are required to participate in the Teacher Advisor Program. TAP is an attempt to complement the guidance services by providing resource information, acclimation and orientation to the school, and a sense of group and indivi-

dual awareness.

The CRLS code of discipline was developed with the assistance of parents, teachers, students, administrators and school committee members. All disciplinary procedures practiced by the House Administrator and T.I.C. are based on the rules and regulations outlined in the code. The philosophy in House B has been to exercise sound judgement in a helping and respectful manner. The interpretation of the code is a major responsibility of the House B administrator. The wisdom of decisions made can determine how students and staff view the leadership ability of the administrator. Recommendations for expulsion from school, out of school and inschool suspensions, detentions, parental/student conferences, schedule modification and referrals have been used at various times as intervention for infractions. How students in House B view these measures will be discussed in a later chapter.

House B is located on the second floor of the Rindge building at CRLS. This space is shared with House C, the teachers' cafeteria, the city's computer center, the CRLS radio station, the student library, the Career Resource Center, a guidance suite, and classrooms for math, science, language arts, social studies, typing, computers, home economics and study hall. There are also two internal walkways connecting the Rindge building to the Arts building and the second floor to the main cafeteria on the first

floor. By far, this is the most travelled area in the school. Traffic control is a major problem during change of class. The area contains, nonetheless, the pulse of the school, with a level of movement and conversation second only to the cafeteria or gymnasium.

It is unlikely that every House B adult knows the face and name of every House B student and vice versa. At present, House B teachers and students are only required to be together during homeroom, House assemblies, and some courses. The House B community does exhibit a sense of belonging and camaraderie in that the students and adults exchange verbal and non verbal greetings, assist each other, respect the property and House environment, and welcome conversation. These are but a few of the observable behaviors as viewed by the House Administrator.

FOOTNOTES - - CHAPTER 3

¹William Glasser, Schools Without Failure (N.Y.:Harper and Row, 1969).

²Garrity, Judge Arthur W., presiding, Tallulah Morgan et. al., versus John Kerrigan et.al., March 31, 1975.

³Department of Implementation, Boston Public Schools, 1980.

⁴"Cambridge Rindge and Latin School Course Catalogue, 1985-86."

⁵Ibid., pp 8-14.

C H A P T E R I V
DESIGN AND PROCEDURES/METHODOLOGIES

The focus and the underlying assumptions of this study included the idea that a House System can be a positive operational management structure provided it is run by an administrator who sees the importance of student participation in and communication about decision-making within that structure. These assumptions are based upon the objective and subjective experiences of the researcher as well as a strong body of research relative to effective schools, adolescent growth, and behavior. This study attempts to bring the theoretical constructs of participatory management closer to practiceable reality by determining workable methods to gain firsthand information from the heretofore least involved members of a school/House community.

The data collected will be used by the House Administrator as the basis for improving communication methods, student involvement in House decision-making and planning, curriculum design, use of personnel and services, and future House evaluations.

Lastly, this study will be the foundation of a framework used by the researcher to begin to identify, plan and implement improvement strategies for the House B students and staff in the areas of student-staff relationships, academic and social awareness, and the application of support

services.

Procedures

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences¹ allows for comprehensive, computerized, data analysis, especially those commonly used in research associated with the social sciences. The statistical procedures used in this study included nominal and ordinal levels of measurement. This process was used to organize and measure information as supplied by the students responding to the questionnaire. Biographical variables were coded and sub-filed while all other variables were coded and filed using the three main categories of fairness, expectations, and help. The questions used in the survey were coded according to the main categories or variables and sub-filed according to unit. Frequencies were done on all items to ascertain distribution along the rating scales as well as to verify coding and inputting of the data. These reports were then crosstabulated for frequencies of two or more of the coded variables; any significant relationship at the p =less than .05 level, were reported out using the chi-square (X_2) test and degrees of freedom (df) statistics. These were two dimensional tables. The accompanying descriptive statistics include the total cases, total number of valid cases, missing cases, mean and standard deviation measure-

ments. A one way analysis of variance was used to identify trends across (between and within) variables at the .05 level. Tests of equality of variance (T - Test) were performed using independent samples and the coded variables of fairness, expectations, and help to determine whether or not a difference between samples is significant at the .05 level using the sample means.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study consisted of a two stage process. The initial stage consisted of the development and use of a questionnaire for the purpose of eliciting perceptions and attitudes of students about the organization, operation and climate/ethos of House B. Basic demographic information about each student was included in the questionnaire relative to sex, grade level, longevity in the City of Cambridge, longevity in House B, academic success, disciplinary involvement and assistance with problem areas. The students were asked to indicate whether they would be interested in knowing the outcome of the questionnaire.

The second stage involved individual interviews with House B students to acquire additional information from a limited sample.

The Sample

The sample used for this study was the student population assigned to House B, grades 9 - 12, at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, including special programs, during the 1983-1984 and 1984-1985 school years. Selection and assignment to this House may have been by student choice, random assignment, parent choice, or program designation, such as the Special Education Job Skills Programs. The Job Skills Development Program "provides academic and prevocational training experiences for high school special needs students..."²

The overall student population of House B consisted of one hundred eleven freshmen (grade 9); eighty-seven sophomores (grade 10); seventy-nine juniors (grade 11); eighty seniors (grade 12); thirteen non-level (ungraded). The total of three hundred seventy students, one hundred ninety-three were female and one hundred seventy-seven were male. The student population fluctuates during the school year by virtue of registrations and withdrawals. The total enrollment of House B changed periodically but rarely by more than five to ten students. At the end of the 1984-85 school year there were three hundred eighty-four students. The demographic information requested in the questionnaire will be reported in Chapter V, however, reference is made to suspension and attendance to school. The average daily attendance for the 1983-84 school year in House B was 89%;

the yearly average for students late to school for House B was 7%. The comparison between suspensions recorded by the House B office and student perceptions and reports of suspensions will be made in Chapter V, research findings.

Student participation in this study was voluntary.

Students were given the option of anonymity for all written evaluations and were allowed, if interested, to participate in personal interviews and/or group discussions about the nature of the survey.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire format consisted of inquiries about the operation of House B. Students were asked to give their interpretations of how the House operates; how the House System influences and is influenced by various situations; what they regard as advantages and disadvantages; and how this particular form of organization affects their academic and social experiences at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. The survey instrument was constructed with the help of an evaluation tool designed and used as a School Climate Survey at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School, 1979 - 1981 (Wasserman, et al., 1979). The survey questions were modified to limit discussion to House B as opposed to schoolwide issues.

The questionnaire was pilot tested in May 1983, using students assigned to House B in grades nine through twelve.

The homeroom distribution format was followed. Modifications to the questionnaire were made on the basis of answers given, as well as comments made relative to the length of time required to complete the questionnaire. Revisions were also made as a result of reviews by the Research Consulting Service at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

The questionnaire revisions included dividing the instrument into two units. The rationale was based upon the length of time needed to complete a 100 question survey versus one that had 42 to 46 items. Section C of the pilot questionnaire, originally an open-ended format, was incorporated into section A as a check-list of choices based upon the most frequent answers written by the pilot group. Informal conversations with students prompted the inclusion of some choices.

Section A of each unit contained similar and dissimilar questions. Section B of each unit was identical and supplied demographical data about the student sample. The questionnaires were distributed in homeroom classes. Every student in the House is assigned to a specific homeroom, usually by grade level, for informational and attendance purposes. Homeroom teachers distributed and collected the questionnaire with the understanding that students could choose not to participate.

Administration of Questionnaire

Homeroom teachers were given verbal and written instructions relative to the distribution, administration and collection of the questionnaire. Each student received a booklet with a coversheet. The coversheet described the purpose of the questionnaire, and provided the signature of the House Administrator and lines for the date, homeroom number, and (optional) student name.

Teachers read the directions as they were written on the second page of each booklet. Teachers were instructed to stress that this was a voluntary activity and no student would be penalized for participation or non-participation.

Students were instructed not to discuss their answers or ideas while filling out the booklet. Each student was allotted forty-five (45) minutes to complete the questionnaire. Those who finished prior to that time passed their booklets to the homeroom teacher. At the end of the 45 minute time period, all booklets were collected by the teacher and returned to the House office. Students indicated their desire to receive information about the questionnaire results by checking the box on the last page and returning that page separately to the homeroom teacher. There was no follow-up attempt to reach students who were not in attendance on the day of the survey.

Responses were tabulated on the basis of individual questions answered and, therefore, not on the basis of a

completed survey. The assumption made by the researcher was that students would voluntarily answer those questions about which there was an interest or opinion and that did not pose a real or imagined threat to privacy. (S.B. Anderson, 1977).

On the date of administration, fifty-nine students were officially absent from school in House B, leaving a total population of three hundred eleven students. Two hundred fifty - seven questionnaires were returned with answers. The non-participants were assumed to have been disinterested; unwilling to participate; not properly equipped to participate (no pen/pencil); or not fully aware of the instructions given. Although students were told that they did not have to identify themselves, 150 students chose to sign their names on the coversheet. This did not, however, allow the researcher to determine which students did not participate, nor the reason for non-participation.

The Interview

The structure of the interview was influenced by participant time availability, level of comfort with the interview setting, and the participant's knowledge of the variables being tested. Since all participants were students, actively involved in classes and other commitments, no consistent time frame could be constructed for all interviews. There was a serious effort to schedule

interviews so as not to interfere with regularly scheduled classes or events (i.e. work, practices and performances, home responsibilities, appointments). There was a conscious effort made to build in enough time prior to and after each interview to allow for settling-in, amenities or clarifying questions.

The social context of the interview as described by Gordon (1980) included the selection of respondents who were willing and able to give relevant information; selection of an interviewer who could best relate to respondents; the choice of time and place; giving respondents an acceptable explanation of the purpose of the interview and for whom or what it would service, and outlining safeguards for protecting respondents anonymity.³

The focus of the interviews was the measurement of subjective rather than objective information; therefore every student in House B was considered as having relevant information. The selection of the interviewer was a dilemma in that the role of the investigating administrator was one of power and authority and some of the potential respondents had experienced less positive interaction with the administrator in the form of reprimand, suspension or parental conferences. Some of the respondents may have had no direct involvement and yet could feel threatened by any conversation with the administrator. There were other students who had experienced very positive interaction with

the administrator and therefore were not wary of the interview process. The decision to assume the role of interviewer was made by the researcher to further stress the objectives of this study. The outcomes of the interviews--be they supportive, rejective or new findings--were equally important in that they were examples of student attitudes, behaviors or beliefs relative to House B, including the House Administrator. The interviewer was aware of the possibility of whether or not information was being given by virtue of the respondents' a) not seeing their answers as having negative value and therefore were uninhibited; b) desire to be helpful and therefore candid; c) desire to embarrass or deflate the interviewer; or d) positive relationship with the interviewer and therefore willingness to assist in a genuine and sincere activity.⁴ In this study, the inhibiting factors of the interviews are of great importance to the researcher in attempting to develop effective lines of communication between students and adults in House B. Participants were chosen first from the 150 students who filled out and returned the request for feedback sheet attached to the questionnaire; as far as possible, participants were representative of the male/female; minority-non-minority membership of House B. Grade level, academic and non-academic activity, and disciplinary involvement of students were also criteria used to insure that a representative sample of the House B population was

interviewed. Since present grade 9 students were not part of the questionnaire population, interview selection was limited to the grade 10,11 and 12 levels.

Each interview session began with the interviewer reading the following statement: "This interview is a follow-up to the student questionnaire conducted in May, 1984 in House B. Students have been asked to voluntarily participate in this interview with the understanding that their names will not be used in reporting the results of these conversations; although direct quotes will be incorporated, names and events will not be identified to relate to any individual student."

Each interview lasted approximately thirty (30) minutes. All conversations were recorded on tape, with participant permission, to allow for more accurate analysis and reporting. All interview tapes were transcribed verbatim.

The questions chosen for the interviews were based upon the analysis of the questionnaire findings. These questions were incorporated into each interview session. A total of 20 students were interviewed through this process.

Bias and Limitations of the Research Methodology

A major limitation of this study is the integral involvement of the researcher as the investigator and implementer. In many ways this query may be seen as a self-

evaluation through the eyes of one's charges. The limitation seems to be one of role conflict in that the researcher has been actively involved with the situation and its participants for the past three and one-half years. Although the methodology is heavily weighted toward the collection of subjective data the analysis is dependent upon the objectivity of the researcher.

The researcher has a vested interest in the outcomes and would certainly prefer positive, reinforcing data since there has been an ongoing commitment, prior to investigation, to the underlying purposes for this study. The methodology proposed for this study has attempted to control the bias of the research through extensive reporting of findings. The strongest safeguard against bias is in the study framework itself. There were no hypotheses or major assumptions promulgated and therefore no need to prove or disprove. The nature of this study has focused more on fact-finding and identification of areas of interest and concern.

The personal bias that may be present in the interpretation of information given in this study is necessary in order to understand the issues raised by students. The researcher has been integrally involved with all of the constituent groups (parents, teachers, students, administrators, counselors) and has the authority to propose and implement change. The basis of this study is how students

see what is and therefore the focus is on improvement and inclusion not evaluation. There are no right answers to the questions asked.

Little specific research has been done about the House System and therefore comparisons are difficult to make with regard to other research. Another limiting factor is the understanding that this inquiry is only one part of the total picture needed to implement policies and programs. It is however important for students to see this vehicle as their point of view and to witness that the reporting of findings are done in a non-judgemental manner. Their perceptions must be taken seriously.

Number _____

STUDENT SURVEY

HOUSE B CRLS

School Year 1983-1984

The purpose of this questionnaire is to find out how you feel about House B at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School. You are asked to give your honest opinion. Eventually the data taken from these questionnaires will be used to develop plans to improve our House in the areas of most concern and interest.

You are asked to write your name on this sheet so that we will be sure that we have reached every student. At no time will your name be connected with any opinions you expressed in this booklet. If you do not wish to use your name it will not invalidate your answers. Your responses will be reported and analyzed as group information. Thank you.

House AdministratorNAME _____
(optional)

DATE _____ 1984

HOMEROOM _____

DIRECTIONS

Do the following steps for each statement in Section A:

1. Think about how the statement describes House B
2. Circle ONE number for each statement according to the following choices:

Circle 1 if you STRONGLY AGREE with the statement.

Circle 2 if you AGREE with the statement.

Circle 3 if you DO NOT have an opinion about the statement.

Circle 4 if you DISAGREE with the statement.

Circle 5 if you STRONGLY DISAGREE with the statement.

SECTION A

	STRONGLY AGREE	NO OPINION	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1. People here usually avoid admitting that problems exist.	1	2	3	4 5
2. I know exactly what will happen if I break a rule.	1	2	3	4 5
3. People pay little attention to what you say in class.	1	2	3	4 5
4. Students get an equal chance to speak to their House Administrator	1	2	3	4 5
5. Students help make the rules in this House	1	2	3	4 5
6. Students from my racial or ethnic group are treated fairly.	1	2	3	4 5
7. House B is too noisy.	1	2	3	4 5
8. Most teachers in House B will assist a student who needs help.	1	2	3	4 5
9. Students get the marks they earn from their teachers.	1	2	3	4 5
10. Students need permission to do almost anything in this house.	1	2	3	4 5
11. Teachers in House B are equally friendly to students of different racial and ethnic groups.	1	2	3	4 5
12. School rules are broken so often they are considered a joke.	1	2	3	4 5
13. Students from my racial or ethnic group are more likely to get suspended.	1	2	3	4 5
14. The House Administrator asks for our ideas about solving school problems.	1	2	3	4 5
15. The school rules are enforced by the House Administrator in a reasonable way.	1	2	3	4 5

STRONGLY DISAGREE
DISAGREE
NO OPINION
AGREE
STRONGLY AGREE

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 16. I can learn if I work hard. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. Teachers in House B expect more from students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. The guidance counselors are important people in House B. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 19. Only the smarter students get the best teachers. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 20. Students have little to say in planning House activities. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 21. I receive as much help as I ask for with my school work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 22. Problems are usually discussed before action is taken by the House Administrator or TIC. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 23. Students know their responsibilities in House B. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 24. House B teachers expect students to be on time for class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 25. Teachers expect students to be prepared for class. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 26. Students in House B feel good about being in House B. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 27. Students in House B can express their opinions. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 28. Students can choose their House. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 29. The House Administrator, TIC, counselors, and teachers work as a team to help students succeed in school. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 30. Most teachers respect students. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 31. It is important to have classes with students from my House. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 32. House B students are proud of their achievements. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 33. Students are told what will happen when a school rule is broken. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

STRONGLY DISAGREE
DISAGREE
NO OPINION
AGREE
STRONGLY AGREE

34. Students seldom talk to the House Administrator unless they are in trouble. 1 2 3 4 5
35. If I could change three rules or procedures in House B, they would be:
(check three items below)
- a. Change detention time for tardiness.
- b. Better communication between students and administrators.
- c. More student activities in House B.
- d. More House B trips.
- e. More student discussions about issues that affect students.
- f. More student involvement in establishing rules.
- g. More rewards for students who do good things.
- h. Fewer study hall periods.
- i. Involve students in reviewing the school discipline code.
- j. A better way to meet with guidance counselors.
- k. Longer lunch periods.
- l. Change off campus rules.
- m. Make TAP voluntary.
- n. Find more ways to help students with their problems.
- o. I wouldn't change anything.

SECTION A

STRONGLY DISAGREE
 DISAGREE
 NO OPINION
 AGREE
 STRONGLY AGREE

- | | |
|---|-----------|
| 1. Students in House B talk openly about school problems. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 2. It is difficult to concentrate in class because of noise in the corridor. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 3. In House B little is ever done about problems. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 4. You can get good advice in House B when you need help. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 5. Some students in House B are favored more than others by the House Administrator. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 6. Students are usually asked about decisions that affect them, before they are made. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 7. Most House B teachers are willing to have you come to them for extra help. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 8. Students help plan activities in House B. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 9. School rules and procedures apply to everyone equally in House B. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 10. People here make you feel that you are wasting time when you ask for help. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 11. I understand the reasons for rules in this school. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 12. Students in House B are treated fairly. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 13. Students are able to ask the House Administrator about decisions that are made. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 14. My guidance counselor thinks my education is important. | 1 2 3 4 5 |
| 15. When problems arise in school, students can get help from the House B office. | 1 2 3 4 5 |

	STRONGLY DISAGREE	DISAGREE	NO OPINION	AGREE	STRONGLY AGREE
16. Students know their rights in House B	1	2	3	4	5
17. Most adults in House B will take time to listen to students.	1	2	3	4	5
18. Student government has no importance in this House.	1	2	3	4	5
19. House B teachers expect students to be on time for class.	1	2	3	4	5
20. Teachers expect students to be prepared for class.	1	2	3	4	5
21. Students in House B feel good about being in House B.	1	2	3	4	5
22. Students are encouraged to visit the House office.	1	2	3	4	5
23. The House Administrator, TIC, counselors and teachers work as a team to help students succeed in school.	1	2	3	4	5
24. Most students respect teachers.	1	2	3	4	5
25. There are no differences between House B and the other Houses or Programs in this school.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I get most of the courses I choose.	1	2	3	4	5
27. School rules are enforced in House B.	1	2	3	4	5
28. It is important to have classes with teachers from my House.	1	2	3	4	5
29. Students are told what will happen when a school rule is broken.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I have read the student handbook.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Students can choose their House.	1	2	3	4	5

32. If I could change three rules or procedures in House B, they would be:

(check three items below)

- a. Change detention time for tardiness.
- b. Better communication between students and administrators.
- c. More student activities in House B.
- d. More House B trips.
- e. More student discussions about issues that affect students.
- f. More student involvement in establishing rules.
- g. More rewards for students who do good things.
- h. Fewer study hall periods.
- i. Involve students in reviewing the school discipline code.
- j. A better way to meet with guidance counselors.
- k. Longer lunch periods.
- l. Change off campus rules.
- m. Make TAP voluntary.
- n. Find more ways to help students with their problems.
- o. I wouldn't change anything.

SECTION B

DIRECTIONS

Please circle the most correct answer to the following questions:

1. I am a
 - a) male
 - b) female
2. I am presently a
 - a) Freshman
 - b) Sophomore
 - c) Junior
 - d) Senior
 - e) Other
3. After I leave high school, I plan to
 - a) enter a four year college or university
 - b) enter a two year school
 - c) enter a special training program
 - d) get a full time job
 - e) enter the armed forces
 - f) undecided
4. I have been a House B student for
 - a) less than 1 school year
 - b) 2 years
 - c) 3 years
 - d) more than 3 years
5. My grades in school are
 - a) mostly A's (90-100)
 - b) mostly B's (80-89)
 - c) mostly C's (70-79)
 - d) mostly D's (60-69)
 - e) mostly failures
6. Most of my after school hours are spent
 - a) working up to 20 hours a week
 - b) working over 20 hours a week
 - c) participating in school activities
 - d) working and participating in school activities
 - e) attending to home responsibilities
 - f) doing volunteer work
 - g) doing nothing in particular

7. The language most frequently spoken in my home is
- a) Chinese c) French/Haitian e) Italian g) Spanish
b) English d) Greek f) Portuguese h) Other
8. I have lived in Cambridge
- a) less than 1 year
b) 1 year
c) 2 years
d) 3 years
e) 4 years
f) all my life
9. What disciplinary issues have you been involved in while you have been in House B: (circle one)
- a) Issues of attendance (class cutting, school truancy)
b) Behavior issues (conflicts with staff members or other students)
c) Both A and B
d) I have not been involved in any disciplinary issues
10. Have you been suspended from school since you have been in House B?
- a) Yes b) No c) Does not apply to me
11. What problems have you been helped with since you have been in House B?
- a) Issues of attendance and/or behavior
b) Academic issues (scheduling, course change, tutoring)
c) Both A and B
d) None

Thank you very much for your assistance and cooperation in filling out this survey. If you would like further information about the results of this questionnaire, please check the box below and give this page to your homeroom teacher. Again, thank you.

Please let me know the results of this survey.

NAME _____

HOMEROOM _____

Interview Question Format

- 1) Based upon your feelings about House B last year, what does House B look like now:
 - a) Have there been any improvements?
 - b) Have things gotten worse?
 - c) What can be done to maintain improvements or change negative situations that you see existing in House B?
- 2) Where do students (do you as a student) fit into the House B scheme/structure?
- 3) Where/how should you be involved?
- 4) What message should be given to incoming students to House B?
- 5) How best can the administrators (me, T.I.C.) help you as a student?
- 6) How best can the guidance counselors and teachers help you as a student?
- 7) What should be (or are) student responsibilities for their school lives?
- 8) What commitments are you willing to make in order to have a more enjoyable and productive school experience?
- 9) What do students really need to know as a result of being in school?

- 10) What would get your parent(s)/guardian(s) involved with/in school activities?
- 11) What has the greatest effect upon you with regard to doing well in school? (Motivating force(s)).
- 12) What "turns you off" about school?
- 13) What are your future plans?
- 14) Do you have any heroes/heroines; people who you think of as very special or important?

FOOTNOTES - - CHAPTER 4

¹Norman H. Nie, et.al., The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (N.Y.:McGraw-Hill, 1975).

²CRLS Course Catalog, 1984-85 (Cambridge:Charles River Publishing Company, 1984), p.28.

³Raymond L. Gorden, Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques, and Tactics, 1980, p.72.

⁴Ibid., p.157.

C H A P T E R V
FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to document the development of a framework for student involvement in the organizational structure of House B at C.R.L.S. It is important to get some idea of the amount of information students have about House administration and their perceptions about their role within that structure. An analysis of this information should give the House Administrator a clearer understanding about the type of information students have about the House System, operational perceptions, and what areas of student concern should be explored. Furthermore, students must know that they are a very legitimate component in shaping the academic and social phases of their existence. It is an error to believe that any other component can assume total knowledge of or responsibility for the ideas and concerns of students. To this end, communication between and among students and other groups operating in this model, is essential.

Organization of This Chapter

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first part deals with the findings of the questionnaire adminis-

tered to House B students in May of 1984. Part two is an anecdotal narrative of findings from interviews held with a representative sampling of House B students in May of 1985. Where appropriate, supportive data compiled from records maintained by the House B office will be included. Comparative findings will be discussed as they relate to the topic issues of fairness, expectations and accessibility.

Part I

Findings of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire administered to House B students focused on three primary areas. The questions were expected to elicit student perceptions and information relative to the following general questions:

- (1) Do students know what is expected of them in House B?
- (2) Are House B personnel accessible to students?
- (3) Does the House structure and atmosphere address student concerns and priorities?

In the analysis of the questionnaire the items asked were assigned to issue or topic categories of FAIR, EXPECT, and HELP.

One drawback to this categorization is the assumption

that all of the students who responded, made the same category association when focusing on the question. There may have been enough ambiguity to allow for more than one category to be addressed by an individual question.

The author is satisfied that the categories chosen are interdependent and overall results are not dependent upon the exclusivity of categories. The operational framework used centered around the following understandings about each category.

Fairness issues or concerns dealt with:

- knowing the perimeters of the House and school with regard to rule and discipline.
- being given due process.
- equitable access to personnel and programs.
- being part of decision-making process.
- bias and discriminatory practices.
- receiving equitable grades for work accomplished.
- freedom of choice (without reprisal).
- freedom of expression (without reprisal).

If students responded favorably to questions about this issue one can assume that their perception is one of fair treatment; an environment that allows for differences and preferences. It also infers that students are informed about their rights and responsibilities in House B. Items that dealt with expectations were those which:

- ask about relationships (student-student, adult-student).
- also deal with understanding what consequences exist
- emphasize self-worth, personal goals as well as other's expectations.
- indicate levels of importance: things, events, people.
- examine pride, respect, comraderie, individuality.

A student makes choices (classes, teachers, House/Program) because of an expectation that he/she has developed. Without placing a value on that expectation I would venture to say that most relationships and choices are based upon the hope that the choice or relationship will be positive for the individual. If there are no discernable differences evident to the student between or among people and places than there is less importance assigned to having a choice. Without a choice there is no vested interest in the outcome. Therefore, for instance, if the student feels that there are no differences between Houses then there is no need to be concerned about which House/Program he/she is in or which teacher is teaching a course or who his/her counselor may be.

Experience has shown that these choices are important to students and the individual student has preferences based upon his/her perception of a situation or person.

The Help category was composed of questions about:

- willingness to interact with adults in House B.
- the sense that students are welcomed by staff.
- the student's perception of how the adults interact with each other and on behalf of the student.
- whether or not there is active listening among and between students and adults.
- whether or not there is a perception that people can solve problems.
- the approachability of adults in House B.
- whether or not the atmosphere/environment is conducive to learning.
- how adult roles have been defined as "helping people".

Role definition and identification are very crucial to whether or not a student sees the adult as someone who will assist in what ever capacity necessary. This is extremely difficult for the House Administrator or Teacher-in-Charge since much of their interaction with students is, traditionally, negative or punitive.

The results may well be the same if the person seen as the "helper" is inaccessible to students or is perceived as unavailable. Even the persistent student is not always successful. The end result is not getting the help required and/or requested.

Of the 370 students assigned to House B during the 1983-1984 school year, 311 students were present during the administration of the questionnaire. Of that number, 257 questionnaires were returned.

An item by item frequency analysis was done for section A of both units. Section A requested students to rate each statement on a scale of one (1) to five (5) where number one indicated strong agreement; two indicated agreement; three meant no opinion; four for disagreement; and five to indicate strong disagreement, with the statement. The final question in Section A in both units was identical. All respondents were asked to indicate their choices for rule or procedure changes in House B. An item by item frequency analysis of the questionnaires had the following result:

Unit I (138 students responding)

1. People here usually avoid admitting that problems exist.
23% agree 47% disagree 30% no opinion
2. I know exactly what will happen if I break a rule.
78% agree 13% disagree 9% no opinion
3. People pay little attention to what you say in class.
42% agree 33% disagree 25% no opinion
4. Students get an equal chance to speak to their House Administrator.
55% agree 20% disagree 25% no opinion
5. Students help make the rules in this House.
21% agree 48% disagree 31% no opinion
6. Students from my racial or ethnic group are treated fairly.
69% agree 5% disagree 26% no opinion
7. House B is too noisy.
50% agree 25% disagree 25% no opinion
8. Most teachers in House B will assist a student who needs help.
74% agree 12% disagree 14% no opinion
9. Students get the marks they earn from their teachers.
54% agree 22% disagree 14% no opinion
10. Students need permission to do almost anything in this House.
22% agree 62% disagree 16% no opinion
11. Teachers in House B are equally friendly to students of different racial and ethnic groups.
64% agree 8% disagree 28% no opinion
12. School rules are broken so often they are considered a joke.
41% agree 23% disagree 36% no opinion
13. Students from my racial or ethnic group are more likely to get suspended.
55% agree 14% disagree 11% no opinion
14. The House Administrator asks for our ideas about solving school problems.
28% agree 38% disagree 34% no opinion

15. The school rules are enforced by the House Administrator in a reasonable way.
54% agree 10% disagree 36% no opinion
16. I can learn if I work hard.
91% agree 4% disagree 5% no opinion
17. Teachers in House B expect more from students.
43% agree 15% disagree 42% no opinion
18. The guidance counselors are important people in House B
74% agree 12% disagree 4% no opinion
19. Only the smarter students get the best teachers.
78% agree 7% disagree 15% no opinion
20. Students have little to say in planning House activities.
43% agree 30% disagree 27% no opinion
21. I receive as much help as I ask for with my school work.
62% agree 24% disagree 14% no opinion
22. Problems are usually discussed before action is taken by the House Administrator or T.I.C.
53% agree 18% disagree 29% no opinion
23. Students know their responsibilities in House B
65% agree 19% disagree 16% no opinion
24. House B teachers expect students to be on time for class.
84% agree 3% disagree 13% no opinion
25. Teachers expect students to be prepared for class.
90% agree 1% disagree 9% no opinion
26. Students in House B feel good about being in House B.
57% agree 9% disagree 34% no opinion
27. Students in House B can express their opinions
58% agree 25% disagree 17% no opinion
28. Students can choose their House.
56% agree 20% disagree 24% no opinion
29. The House Administrator, T.I.C., counselors, and teachers work as a team to help students succeed in school.
67% agree 13% disagree 20% no opinion

30. Most teachers respect students.
62% agree 20% disagree 18% no opinion
31. It is important to have classes with students from my House.
35% agree 29% disagree 36% no opinion
32. House B students are proud of their achievements.
66% agree 1% disagree 33% no opinion
33. Students are told what will happen when a school rule is broken.
19% agree 56% disagree 25% no opinion
34. Students seldom talk to the House Administrator unless they are in trouble.
19% agree 56% disagree 25% no opinion

An item by item frequency analysis of Unit II Section A of the questionnaire had the following results:

Unit II (119 students responding)

1. Students in House B talk openly about school problems.
45% agree 29% disagree 26% no opinion
2. It is difficult to concentrate in class because of noise in the corridor.
59% agree 25% disagree 16% no opinion
3. In House B little is ever done about problems.
50% agree 19% disagree 31% no opinion
4. You can get good advice in House B when you need help.
67% agree 10% disagree 23% no opinion
5. Some students in House B are favored more than others by the House Administrator.
31% agree 31% disagree 38% no opinion
6. Students are usually asked about decisions that affect them before they are made.
47% agree 19% disagree 35% no opinion
7. Most House B teachers are willing to have you come to them for extra help.
81% agree 10% disagree 9% no opinion
8. Students help plan activities in House B.
68% agree 12% disagree 20% no opinion

9. School rules apply to everyone equally in House B.
68% agree 17% disagree 15% no opinion
10. People here make you feel that you are wasting time when you ask for help.
53% agree 18% disagree 29% no opinion
11. I understand the reasons for rules in this school.
77% agree 11% disagree 12% no opinion
12. Students in House B are treated fairly.
70% agree 13% disagree 17% no opinion
13. Students are able to ask the House Administrator about decisions that are made.
50% agree 16% disagree 34% no opinion
14. My guidance counselor thinks my education is important.
77% agree 10% disagree 13% no opinion
15. When problems arise in school, students can get help from the House B office.
69% agree 6% disagree 25% no opinion
16. Students know their rights in House B
55% agree 14% disagree 31% no opinion
17. Most adults in House B will take time to listen to students.
71% agree 7% disagree 22% no opinion
18. Student government has no importance in the House.
44% agree 12% disagree 44% no opinion
19. House B teachers expect students to be on time.
88% agree 2% disagree 10% no opinion
20. Teachers expect students to be prepared for class.
88% agree 4% disagree 8% no opinion
21. Students in House B feel good about being in House B.
64% agree 8% disagree 28% no opinion
22. Students are encouraged to visit the House office.
43% agree 26% disagree 31% no opinion
23. The House Administrators, T.I.C., counselors and teachers work as a team to help students succeed in school.
64% agree 8% disagree 28% no opinion

24. Most students respect teachers.
49% agree 22% disagree 29% no opinion
25. There are no differences between House B and other Houses/Programs in this school.
58% agree 18% disagree 24% no opinion
26. I get most of the courses I choose.
74% agree 20% disagree 6% no opinion
27. School rules are enforced in House B.
59% agree 7% disagree 34% no opinion
28. It is important to have classes with teachers from my House.
38% agree 28% disagree 34% no opinion
29. Students are told what will happen when a school rule is broken.
78% agree 12% disagree 10% no opinion
30. I have read the student handbook.
47% agree 27% disagree 26% no opinion
31. Students can choose their House.
47% agree 31% disagree 22% no opinion

Section B of both units were identical and requested demographic information about the student responding. These items were coded as: sex, level (i.e. Freshman, Sophomore), future plans (i.e. college, work), longevity (in House B), grades (i.e. A,B,C) lived (how long in Cambridge), language (spoken at home), after-school (activities), discipline (behavior, attendance), suspension (yes, no), and problems (academic, behavior).

Sex: 114 Male, 143 Female

Level: 58% Freshmen and Sophomores, 42% Juniors and Seniors

Future Plans: 58% College/Training, 21% work, 21% undecided

Longevity:	38%-1 yr., 24%-2 yrs., 18%-3 yrs., 20%-4 yrs.
Grades:	51% A-B, 42% C, 7% D and below
Lived in Cambridge:	90% always, 6% 2 yrs. or less, 4% 3-4 yrs.
Language:	78% English 22% non-English
After School:	39% work, 17% home responsibilities., 27% nothing, 17% extra curricular activities
Discipline:	25% attendance, 8% behavior, 11% both, 56% none
Suspension:	13% yes 87% no
Problems:	43% yes 57% no
Type of Problem(s):	7% attendance/behavior, 40% academic, 12% both, 41% none

Using these coded items a one way analysis of variance was done to detect possible areas of significance between coded items and fairness, expectations, and help. Of the two hundred fifty-seven students responding, there were no significant relationships at the .05 level, between grades, longevity in House B, length of time living in the City of Cambridge, sex, future plans, after school activities, language spoken at home, discipline issues, suspension involvement, or help received with problems, and the three topic areas. Students' perceptions are what they are without regard to the dependent variables. These findings are encouraging in that they imply that whatever is or is not happening in House B relative to fairness, expectations and accessibility of help, as perceived by students, is not

concentrated for only one particular group of students who ascribe to any particular set of criteria used in the study. Similarly, when examined among themselves, the variables of fairness, expectations, and help show no significant relationship with regard to student perception.

The crosstabulation of variables revealed patterns of information which may be useful in determining curricular innovations, particularly in the areas of career education and scheduling of courses. Analysis shows that during their first year, (17.6% male, 14.3% female), House B students spent at least twenty hours per week after school, working. There is a significant increase in this percentage for students in their second and third years, 53% and 57% respectively for male students, 57% and 78% respectively for females students. It is fair to assume that the increase from year one to years two and three is largely the result of most students reaching the age of sixteen and therefore, becoming eligible to work at a wider variety of jobs. Of the senior students (4th year) 71% of the male students and 85% of the female students were employed after school. For whatever reasons, students were very committed to working. Overall, 41% females and 35% male students were engaged in employment while attending school. Logic leads one to question the impact of work on academic success. For this study, academic success was equated with the numerical or letter grade received for

class/course work. Students were asked to indicate their perception of their own academic success using the following code: A=100-90; B=89-80; C=79-70; D=69-60; category E=mostly failures. During analysis this was recoded by the researcher to categories of A/B=100-80; C=79-70; D and E=69-failure. Academic success was equated to a student's command of 80% or more of the expected knowledge in a course. The "C" category was equated to an average ability level, and below "C" as failing or meeting only minimal requirements. Using this scale, 36% of the working students rated their grades in the academically successful category; 40% of the working students rated themselves in the "C" category; and 31% considered themselves doing below "C" work in school. Clearly students do not perceive work as an encumbrance to succeeding in school.

With such an overwhelming emphasis on work one has to ask about the future plans of students and if in fact the educational focus is in proper perspective. An analysis of student plans by level revealed that 60% of the grade 9 and 10 students plan to continue their education after graduating, while 16% intend to work and 26% were undecided. The upperclass students, (grades 11 and 12), registered 57% going on to an educational setting; 28% working; and 15% undecided about plans after high school. Although working seems to be a priority while in high school, most students in House B plan to continue their education after gradu-

ating from high school; this conclusion is not level specific since both lower and upper grade level students were proportionately similar statistically.

When coupled with grades received (as reported by students), future plans were more concrete for students who perceived themselves as academically successful. A significant percentage of students who rated their grades at "C" or below are undecided or less sure about their future plans.

TABLE 4

Plans

Grades	School	Work	Undecided
A-B	69%	9%	22%
C	49%	32%	19%
Below C	38%	19%	44%

When grades received is looked at in isolation 93% of the House B students responding to the questions perceived themselves as capable students receiving grades of "C" or better.

Although there was no measure of significance between grades received and the issues of fairness, expectations, or availability of help, there is indication that a relationship exists between grades and discipline. Of the students who reported no disciplinary involvement 98% received grades of "C" and better; 66% in the A-B category and 2% received grades below "C".

TABLE 5

Grades	Percentage
A-B	66%
C	32%
Below C	2%

Of the students who indicated having had disciplinary problems including attendance, behavior, or both categories 26% reported grades of A-B; 57% reported grades of "C", and 17% reported grades below "C". Although 83% of this group had grades of "C" or better, the distribution was greater in the "C" area.

Common Items: There were ten questions asked of both groups of students (Unit I and Unit II) to be used as general comparisons for students who had been in House B for more than 1 year. To the Item: "I know exactly what will happen if I break a rule," students answered, 80% in agreement; 12% disagreed; while 8% had no opinion.

Problems are usually discussed before action is taken by the House Administrator or T.I.C. 52% agreed; 20% disagreed; 28% had no opinion.

House B students can express their opinions. 53% agreed; 23% disagreed; 24% had no opinion.

On issues of fairness the consensus is that students sense they will be treated in a consistently fair manner. They are overwhelmingly aware of the rules of House B.

House B is too noisy; it is difficult to concentrate in class because of noise in the corridor. 58% agreed; 22% disagreed; 20% had no opinion.

House B teachers expect students to be on time for class 88% agreed; 2% disagreed; 10% had no opinion.

Teachers expect students to be prepared for class 90% agreed; 2% disagreed; 8% had no opinion.

The degree of understanding about teacher expectations is apparent.

Students feel good about being in House B 60% agreed; 9% disagreed; while a considerable group, 31% had no opinion.

Students can choose their House. 41% agreed; 31% disagreed; and 28% had no opinion.

Do the House Administrator, T.I.C., counselors, and teachers work as a team to help students succeed in school? 60% agreed; 12% disagreed; 28% had no opinion.

It would seem at least superficially that students who have spent at least one year in the House B environment are sophisticated enough to know, generally, what is available for them, what is expected of them, and see House B as a place of positive ethos. Of interest also, is the group of students, not individually identifiable, who did not feel positively or negatively about these issues. They comprise a large enough group to want to find out more about how

they see themselves functioning, or not functioning within the House.

When asked to choose three changes they would make in House B students responded as follows:

- 53% Change detention time for tardiness.
- 36% Longer lunch periods.
- 31% More House B trips.
- 29% Change off campus rules.
- 23% Find more ways to help students with their problems.
- 19% More student discussions about issues that affect students.
- 18% Make TAP voluntary.
- 16% A better way to meet with guidance counselors.
- 14% More student activities in House B.
- 13% More rewards for students who do good things.
- 13% Fewer study hall periods.
- 11% More student involvement in establishing rules.
- 10% Better communication between students and administrators.
- 7% I wouldn't change anything.
- 6% Involve students in reviewing the school discipline code.

Choices emphasized by students lend themselves very favorably as issues for possible student involvement in

resolving their concerns. There are clearly concerns around policy issues dealing with possible changes of rules that presently exist such as detention, lunch periods, T.A.P., and off campus regulations. While those areas may require schoolwide discussion, House trips and activities, better communications mechanisms, scheduling, and accessibility of services are indeed areas of concern that can be addressed within the House structure. House trips and activities for students in House B are presently the responsibilities of the House government and the House Administrator. As has been the case with many organizations, there hasn't been consistent support of Student Government on the part of most students. Instead, the same small cadre of members are spread thin in an attempt to do the planning and implementing of fund-raising, community service, and student information activities. More effective communication methods can address the need for more student discussion about student issues, student-administrator interaction, guidance procedures and ways of helping students with their problems. Scheduling of classes and subsequent assignment of study hall periods is a joint function of curricular and guidance department personnel. Course choices are initiated by students, but as explained earlier, these courses were not House specific nor was placement guaranteed. There is legitimate reason for concern since some students have had an inordinate number of

study periods assigned. Accessibility of services for students is an issue that will necessitate further investigation. Counseling, tutoring and social services provided by the school system are at the mercy of fiscal constraints causing, in some cases, over subscription for services and over extension of personnel. There is a genuine need to explore some creative ways of allocating, assigning, and acquiring services. Students helping students may be an important component of the solution.

Part II

Findings of the Interviews

Individual interviews were conducted with twenty (20) House B students. The students were chosen at random from the survey forms returned requesting information about the questionnaire results. Students were given a verbal and written description and explanation of the intent of the interview and parental permission was received prior to the interview sessions.

Six (6) students each from grade levels 11 and 12 and eight (8) students from grade 10 were selected to participate. The sample group was representative of the ethnic composition of House B and consisted of ten male and ten

female students.

Students were asked to give their honest perceptions and ideas about questions asked with the understanding that their opinions would not be used by the researcher to cause reprimands or reprisals to themselves or any individuals discussed or mentioned during the conversation.

In reporting the students responses I have incorporated their answers to each question so that no set of statements can be attributed to any one student. You will therefore notice a range of interpretations and ideas expressed by the sample as a whole.

Although students were unable to recall specific answers given in the questionnaire they were able to compare their overall impressions when asked to comment on improvements observed over the past year in House B.

"It's calmed down now...not too many fights in House B. Some kids still hang-out in the hallways. It's better than last year...I think it is."

"I suppose that the organization, like group things for House B has gotten better. You hear more about them than I have in the past two years."

"I think it got better this year...strict on coming in late or if you cut classes."

"I think the things that have improved have been the teacher-student relations."

"I don't know if it's because I've been here longer

and got closer to them (teachers), but I do feel closer to them."

"...I feel that in terms of discipline - detention and monitoring the halls - I see a big improvement in that!"

"Last year it was more hectic than this year...everything is calmed down. People don't run through the halls."

"I think that the people get along. It's a good atmosphere; everybody just seems to come together. There hasn't really been any incidents."

"There seems to be a few more assemblies. Since my freshman year I feel more comfortable. I'm glad I'm here."

"Rudeness of teachers toward students has improved this year."

There is a general sense that the House B atmosphere/ climate has improved noticeably. The questionnaire data indicated a concern about the noise and traffic in the corridors (50% - too noisy in House B; 59% - difficult to concentrate because of noise in corridor).

Most students indicated that they were not aware of any things or conditions in House B that had gotten worse since last year although one student did feel that the crowds in the hallways during change of class has increased.

Another student did indicate, "There are some points that I feel really don't do any good. One point, the detention...it doesn't really sink in...doesn't serve any

purpose." There were two comments made that focused on the frequency or lack of frequency that a student is in the House area. "I'm mostly concerned with getting to class and doing good. I don't really remember the surrounding feelings. I'm not in the House B area that much, so I don't really know what it's like."

Students were asked about ways to maintain improvements or change negative situations in House B. Again the areas of concern focused on climate and interpersonal relationships.

"The kids that don't want to go to classes should go to school from 3 p.m.- 6 p.m.. That's what it seems like. They don't want to go to classes during school hours, they just hang...they should put them in In-House suspension if they don't want to go to class."

"More things with the students, like outings and the student government. Not everyone knows about the government...they hear a little."

"Everyone knows if they're late they'll get detention, but they still hang around. Maybe if you have more security...or start just throwing detentions, being mean, they'll get to class."

"Student-student relationships. Everyone labels you. If you are on a team you're labeled a jock. Other people are labeled wierdo, punk, nerd or a fresh person. No one realizes that you're interested in drama or music..."

"Detention shouldn't be so long."

"...Communicate more with students to get to know them and what they feel; what they want to make better."

"Togetherness...people in House B take pride in their House. We should come a little closer than we are."

"More awards days. Show the good things."

"Not too many students in House B really know where everything is. If it wasn't for my sister coming here the year before I probably wouldn't know where House B was. I think you should get the students to know the rules a little bit better, particularly House B more than the school rules. You should have the students in House B get together more so they can meet each other instead of feeling sort of strange...on a more social level."

"Teacher-student relationships...especially helping students with problems."

"Have the students realize that the shell of a person isn't really what you think. They don't look at the inside...students should be taught to look at the person. Teachers should talk to us not at us like we're two year olds. Sometimes sit down with a few students and just talk with them. That's the best way to get an education."

"To communicate more with the students, to get to know them and what they feel, what they want to make better."

Interpretations of the question: where do students fit into the House B structure, were varied. They ranged from

the personal, social aspects to very philosophical plans for living.

"I would try to help some of the kids; tell them they should go to class on time...it's part of your class participation." "Talk to them about getting to class on time, not being rude, interrupting the teacher when s/he speaks. I wouldn't mind helping if they would listen."

"There's so many different types (of students). Most of them seem like they really want to get together. Most of them seem rather involved."

"To me, the way I fit in, I just come in homeroom, see everybody, say Hi! Really we don't have no part in it (the House) unless you're doing a series of detentions, that's when you have a part. It's really just a name (House B)."

"Students are just here. They should have a say in what goes on...an aspect like detention..see how many of us think it's important."

"If it wasn't for students, you wouldn't have a job; were the most important aspect."

"Most of the students just pass through House B. Students in House B are pretty friendly. They know each other so...they kind of fit in."

"More students need to think academically."

"There's different kinds of people in House B not just one type. In House B there are blacks, whites, Spanish and they all just fit in together here."

"Students have an important role. If anything's wrong, they should help to change it. I don't think there's a vehicle for this."

"They're (students) really important. It's like a game of chess, you can't play chess without the players. If it wasn't for the students there wouldn't be a House B."

"There's no defined role for students. Students do things because they want to be a part of House activities."

There were very few concrete suggestions for ways for students to be involved in the House. Some students knew how to become active components of the House B structure.

"Instead of teachers and stuff...giving the kids things you could have meetings. Some kids get into trouble, you can have a meeting for people who know these kind of people that do things and talk about that. The groups should be of their peers (students) and we can follow through on the things that go on in the school."

"They (students) should be part of it. Everybody can do any activity. Students should help decide how much time you get between classes, how long you think detention should be. Everybody shouldn't get an hour detention for different things."

"More in the House B council or the student government because they (students) just see the rules being handed down to them but when you're actually there, making the rules, it's different. I think students can really learn

from that. The House B newsletter was good. Pick a couple of people from each grade level who are interested in writing."

"Students should be involved to help make decisions for themselves, like peer intervention for discipline and rules. House competitions too."

"Committees such as the Fairness Committee to work with people to come up with positive solutions. I'd be interested in helping in some way if it's to better a situation."

The present school department structure does not allow for preliminary discussion between high school House Administrators and elementary school students prior to their enrollment into the high school. There is limited opportunity for information exchange. Students basically rely on siblings or friends for news about the high school experience. Although most eighth grade students participate in a one day visit and tour of the high school, neither they, nor the House assignment or course load are discussed at that time. When asked what they felt would have been good or helpful information prior to coming to House B at CRLS students described their experiences.

"All I heard was House B is the best house to be in because most kids say you get away with everything. They didn't tell me about how the kids act and how they try to get away with murder."

"They didn't tell me there would be so many people and the types of people...who you should be with and who you shouldn't be with... . They should have told me to apply myself more."

"Don't mess around. When I got here everybody was in House B. When you come up everybody just wants to be with each other but you have to do your work. House B is the same as all the other Houses. Do your four years and don't mess around 'cause they'll get you. Just don't be a hard-head. Do your four years and get out."

"They should tell you to plan for college even though you might not go you should plan. You never know. They should give you more structure during the first two years geared toward academics. Then you can have more flexibility in your junior and senior years. There's a lot you can get out of this school if there's time to do it."

"It was kind of lonely. I'm the only one that didn't know all the people here and I didn't have anyone to talk to for a few days until I met a few girls in my class. We introduced each other and then we had lunch together. We became friends then."

"They should have asked us what courses we wanted to take and ask us if we had any experience with that course or if we were just taking it to be with our friends."

"I wish they had said to take things more seriously. Because now I'm looking back saying I wish I had done that

differently...gotten more involved...done my school work better. Freshman and sophomore year you need to get grounded in your school work...that's where it really counts. Junior year is important but you have to have good working habits and skills. They have to be implemented more or else you're just gonna be messed up and by junior year you try to catch up on everything and it's not going to happen."

"I don't know. It's more strict. I found that out. They (House personnel) tell you what time to be in school, the rules."

"There wasn't any real surprises when I came up here. There was a lot of people...you have to switch classes, that was the biggest change. In TAP (Teacher Advisor Program) I got to meet different people that I didn't know and plus they helped us with some problems we had and they taught us more about ourselves and how we could work together. It really depends on the teacher."

"I asked around. The tour helped a little bit...the 8th grade tour. The range of classes to choose from needs more explanation. You flip through the course catalogue and decide what you think you want to do. I took history last year and I didn't know that it was going to be that hard. I did do well but I think it was because of the teacher."

"They should tell you what the kids are like. They

should tell people they're not bad kids 'cause a lot of people I talk to that aren't from Rindge don't know there are a lot of nice people here. Eighth graders should know that there's a lot of nice people here."

"We should have been told what people were going to be like in high school, how the House System runs, procedures and rules. There should be clearer expectations for students."

The conversations with students seemed to flow naturally from one topic to another. The questions triggered responses that allowed more in depth analysis of what students may have been thinking for some time but unable to express. The "they" referred to by a number of students was then translated into the question of how best can the House B Administrators help students.

"I don't know. It's hard to explain...they tell them to get to class...report to detention...go to studyhall classes...to study all their work. They help them a lot. You can't make a student go to class. The only thing they could do is talk them into going to class, not cutting. It's not worth it. You won't get credit for cutting. They (students) don't listen so there's not much you can do."

"They (administrators) could really talk to you. If people really knew you everything would be easier to come and talk to you about problems. Now I know the adminis-

trator more than when I was a freshman."

"They're (administrators) strict. If you need some help you can go to them."

"Just by listening. Not to have students tell you what to do but listening to what we have to say. If a kid comes in with a problem, just listen."

"I think they (administrators) are doing the best they can right now. They have other things to do. They just can't chase after one student forever."

"Students can talk to them about problems."

"I think you ought to push for excellence, when we have awards assemblies and you see the same people come up for excellence and good attendance at the same time. Stress that the more you come to school you're bound to learn something."

"I think they (administrators) are helpful enough right now. It seems like the administrators know most of the students in House B."

"I never really had to come to the administrators. There's never really been a problem."

Administrators should "not only come in where there's trouble but also if you need someone to talk to who will understand what you feel. Help students see their true potential early on. Be there; let students know you're here for them."

Administrators "shouldn't be so strict. They should

listen to both sides, not just the teacher's. Conferences would be helpful before calls are made home." "If you (students) have a problem you can go to the T.I.C. I guess it gets solved, I'm not sure."

"Most of the people who are bad get to know them (administrators) because they see them all the time but most students don't see them (administrators). You need to interact more with the students like the Senior Breakfast, I thought that was nice."

The follow up question to these conversations dealt with student perceptions of ways in which teachers and counselors could be helpful to students. Responses were limited to House B personnel.

"They (counselors) can help us out with what we want to do for our career and the kind of courses we're gonna take. Suggest the kind of courses they think you should be in. I depend on my teachers a lot for help."

"You have to find them (counselors). They do what they feel is best instead of listening to you."

"The teachers I have, have been a lot of help with school and personal things."

"There's so many kids in House B you can't help everybody individually because there's so many kids. But, that's where your homeroom comes in, like with T.A.P. (Teacher Advisor Program)."

"There's a lot of teachers that offer extra help but

kids don't go because they aren't gonna stay after school. At 2:30 p.m. I'm getting out of here. Once school's over, school's over. Nobody wants to be here for an extra hour."

"Adults could be helpful by listening and talking to come to conclusions with kids."

"Teachers yes, counselors no. I don't get along with all this red tape just to change a class. It should be easier and it should have been talked about."

"People should think about student concerns and why they are not doing their work."

"They (counselors) can be pushy sometimes and not let me take the course I want."

"Teachers...sometimes they can get on your nerves and you got to really understand what they're trying to say and understand each other."

When asked about accessibility of teachers and counselors, one student remarked: "No, you can only see your guidance counselor during study hall. Everybody don't have study halls."

"Some teachers are hard to talk to. If they're strict students probably don't want to talk to them...they probably think they won't help because they might be afraid of that teacher."

"I think you need some more guidance counselors. I think a good idea would be to put up bulletin boards about scholarships and what's going on, things right here in

House B. Some people might miss the announcements from the Main Office."

"Most teachers, I have to say, they're too busy. My homeroom teacher is also my Math teacher...I can go to homeroom and get help. That's good, but they (teachers) should take time out for us."

"I think teachers are helpful but sometimes students take advantage of them."

"Teachers are mainly helpful now. They help with the placement in classes. Some teachers don't know about different courses you ask them to sign off on."

"T.A.P. has been helpful especially with the report card evaluation, it also helps to bring the homeroom together. Especially in 9th grade where I didn't know anybody...to come into T.A.P. at least you knew somebody there. It also helped you to know the homeroom teacher better."

"Counselors should help in deciding what classes to take. What would be challenging and help use skills students have. They should call each student in and go over the schedule, explaining courses...that way students don't come back next year and find the classes are too hard."

"Most teachers are very helpful. They'd rather help you after school, during studyhall or during lunch than to see you flunk. Some students don't take advantage of this".

"Guidance counselors do encourage you about what to take. They need to improve the amount of time it takes to send out student information to colleges."

"The teachers need to be more fair toward everyone. Some teachers would help. I'm not comfortable with some teachers based upon the impressions they give you."

It is evident that students are constantly watching and evaluating adult behavior in the school environment. Having addressed the role and responsibilities of the adults in House B, students were asked to direct their remarks in terms of student responsibilities. The candor and thoughtfulness of their responses were particularly interesting.

"They (students) should go to school and get an education and go to class...make a commitment to go to class and get all their credits so they can be somebody. That's what they go to school for."

"I think it's up to them (students) to learn and show respect for other people as they're learning."

"It's up to them to get what they want and to help other people who want help."

"Watch out for our school...for people trying to vandalize it. If something's happening, try and stay away from it. Or, if you can prevent it, prevent it. Remember what you learn and if you can teach it, teach it."

"I think they (students) should participate. You

might learn something you don't know or that you can use."

"Kids should go to classes and get the most out of the lesson being taught. They should be a normal human being - be good to the school and the House and don't abuse it in any way."

"Students shouldn't come in late. They should know how to be clean and not spit on the stairway 'cause I know they don't do that at home. And, if they have any garbage, not just throw it down on the floor...find a garbage can."

"Students must be respectful to their elders."

"If I don't understand I should ask. I should try to do the best I can."

"Getting to school on time; getting their work done; obeying the rules are student responsibilities."

"I think they should be held responsible for their (students) school work, you can pick yourself out of bed and come to school. They should do their homework and get along with everyone."

"Students should be responsible for themselves and their schoolwork."

"...get to class on time, try to do things yourself. If things don't work then go to get help."

"They should be responsible for the way they act toward other students. They should be kinder. The students shouldn't throw trash on the floor because they're too lazy to go to the trash barrel."

"They should help out the freshman who are new to the school because they are used to it and know what's going on and how things run. Students can talk a little better to each other than child to adult."

Most students interviewed had some very concrete ideas about what they saw as commitments to be made in order to have an enjoyable and productive school experience. Their answers ranged from a strong work ethic to peer counselling and guidance to personal growth and involvement.

"A lot of kids don't want to work, period. You're going to have to do work sometime in your life...better to start now otherwise you're going to be bumming."

"Last year and this year I was on the ski club and the track team last year. I get along with a lot of my teachers. During lunch and studyhall I'm up in the art room drawing. I'm really good at that...if you take a hobby that you like to do you can turn that into a job."

"Joining more clubs next year and hopefully trying to interact with the other students outside of House B. Mainly 9th and 10th grades were to try to get my grades underway and the 11th and 12th to join clubs and do other things."

"Getting good grades. Setting goals for myself. I try to do that every year. I wouldn't mind helping other students learn how to do that too."

"I'd be willing to help other people; if they need

help, like tutoring. If I've already taken the course I'd be willing to help out. Even the House B council...I'd like to get more involved so I know what's going on and I can tell people."

"...sometimes the work gets hard and it's hard to understand. I'm willing to listen and pay attention... follow directions...ask for help and study."

"We have to be willing to face reality and responsibility. Come to school...do homework...study for tests...listen to the teacher...try to join any kind of sports here or work after school."

"School is a priority to me...doing homework. Then comes work."

"I want to get what I can out of my education and not worry about whether other people don't want to learn. Come here and get what I can."

"I plan to be somebody in this world."

Students were asked about what they felt were essential things for them to know before leaving high school and to describe or identify the motivating forces with regard to doing well in school.

"Some of the kids in this school need to learn manners and how to behave. I'd have courses they are interested in taking and how you can manage life. Things they would learn in school could help them out in things they want to do."

"One thing, I want to be somebody and I want to get an education and learn a lot of things. I love going to learn and making good friends."

"Most of them nowadays need to learn respect for who's in charge and what to do and what not to do. 'Just don't come to class if you're not going to sit there and learn. Why ruin it for someone else."

"My sisters were motivational, they really talked to me. They helped me out. Really what I want to do is do well for myself."

"First of all I come to school to show off. Everybody's around. I just couldn't sit home. I like to come to school, it's fun, you get to say 'Hi' to everyone. Sometimes you do get sick of it."

"Writing is my goal. College and journalism. This (high school) is a stepping stone to college."

"I want to go to college, get a degree and find a job. My parents, especially my father, inspire me. If I don't want to go to school, my father asks me why. When I tell him, he says there's no reason...so I go to school!"

"Students need to know that they need an education."

"My mother keeps telling me how much you need school. She keeps pressuring me because we see other people that quit. You see where they are at so you don't want to be there, so you come."

"The fundamentals...you need to get those down. You

don't want to go out of here (high school) and not know how to read or anything."

"I think it's good how we interact with each other. Looking at it from a positive way. When you leave this school you should have a positive attitude, not regretting anything. You need to learn what is expected of us in life....that we're expected to do certain things like we're expected to get our work done and not just come here and fool around. When you get in college you're going to be paying for your education and that's going to be a big difference. I think it's important to take it seriously."

"I have a goal. I don't exactly know what I want to be in life but I know I want to be prepared for whatever I'm going to be. I want to be prepared for that."

"They (students) have to know themselves, what they want to do. They need to know about things that go on around you. The majors (subjects) that are required... you're going to need them sooner or later."

"First...I have to motivate myself but when you see one of your friends doing real good and you know you can do good too and so you try to do as good as that other friend or even better. When you see your friend start slacking off you have to go on your own and do what you have to do."

"What you need to know is how to survive out there. How to have respect for yourself and others."

When students were asked to discuss those things they

considered "turn offs" to school there were two major concerns. Detention ranked very high on the written questionnaire. Similarly, students interviewed judged detention to be the least pleasant, most annoying and unfair condition. The congestion, noise and rushed atmosphere in the House B corridors was next in line for situations felt to be a "turn off." Students felt generally pleased with the idea of being in House B.

"We have different kinds of people and it just seems like everyone gets along. Maybe sometimes there's a fight but a lot of people get along because there's all kinds of people with different haircuts, different styles of clothing. They do things differently but it seems like a lot of people get along with each other."

"...I have a lot of fun. I have a lot of my friends here, they're people I can talk to...they help me deal with a lot of things...they understand."

Most students had ideas about their future plans. College, work and high paying, high satisfaction careers were reported although there was some apprehension about their actual success rate. There was concern about preparing for positions that would not exist for them in the future. Students are inspired and influenced by siblings, parents, characters - real and imagined - from all walks of life.

The degree of maturity and insightfulness of the stu-

dents interviewed could be summed up by a few of the statements volunteered.

"School is a love-hate relationship. I hate to love it and love to hate it!"

"I come to school and I try to do my best. That's all anyone can ask of you is to do your best."

"I think we can be our own heroes. We all have the capacity. Take the good things about yourself and you can be a hero too!"

C H A P T E R V I
IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Implications

The primary goal of this study is to develop a process through which the House Administrator can obtain better information from students, and the possible modifications to House structure that will lead to more student oriented decision-making. A questionnaire was distributed to students in House B eliciting their perceptions of issues of fairness, availability and accessibility of help, and adult student expectations and interaction.

Students were also asked to identify areas of concern and needs for change relative to the three topic areas. The information gathered may be useful as part of an operational framework within the House. The methodologies used - survey and interview - prove to be manageable vehicles for engaging students in meaningful ways while maintaining the sensitive balance between adult authority and student activism.

In addition to the great personal awakening that has occurred for me as a result of this study, there are a number of outcomes which are recurrent throughout the findings.

Students in House B are very aware of their surround-

ings and have concrete ideas about the composition of a positive school atmosphere. The primary factor is the ability of different people to exist within a single environment, in this case House B, and remain committed to their individual goals with a sense of shared purpose, respect and responsibility.

House B students are conscious of their need to be involved with the decision makers within the House relative to their academic and social experiences although past practice has not adequately allowed for such input.

House B students recognize a consistent practice of school rules interpretation by the House Administration. However, they are not necessarily in agreement with the rationale or implementation of certain rules. The level of satisfaction of students with the availability of school/ House B personnel ranges from strong - for teacher accessibility - to mediocre - for House Administrator availability and interaction.

House B students demonstrate a growing level of maturity and have insights into the limitations experienced by students and adults. They express a need to mandate student and adult interpersonal skill-building, as well as a need for increased student pride in the House.

Recognition for accomplishments and continued reinforcement of goals are important issues identified by students. Academic excellence is seen as a formidable objective for

most students.

One of the conclusions to be learned from this study is the need to clearly define House B. By recognizing and reinforcing those objectives and procedures that can be identified and expressed as unique to the House B community, students will have a greater understanding about their roles and responsibilities.

This study also points out the need to maintain lines of communication among and between students and other House B personnel. The activities and opportunities presently available within the House B structure are applauded by students who have been involved in or made aware of them; most notably the Awards Assemblies held quarterly to recognize academic achievement as well as outstanding attendance. Attempts at a House B Newsletter were well received although the activity did not continue into this school year. The use of bulletin boards and display areas for informational purposes has added to the communication link and made more visible the House B "Pride is Alive" campaign.

The revitalization of the House B student government is in its second year and will continue to be a vehicle for student involvement in House and school wide policy making and activity development. Most House B students are not in touch with their student organization. There will be a concerted effort made to lend staff and administrative

support to students in House B to develop a stronger, more effective vehicle for student government activities.

A recurrent concern voiced by students interviewed and substantiated by the questionnaire was the important link between teachers and students. There were few opportunities for House B students and House B teachers to interact on an ongoing basis. The "Teacher Advisor Program" met some of the needs for interpersonal and intergenerational sharing and understanding, however, the emphasis of the TAP curriculum did not focus on building the more personal/intimate bonds between student and teacher.

The 1985-86 school year will see a major shift in scheduling of courses and teachers for the freshmen (grade 9) students. There will be a consistent effort to place House B students in courses with House B teachers. The development of a core curriculum for grade 9 students will help to address the concerns of some students for a more directed and structured academic foundation for freshmen. Students exhibit a willingness to delay their need to make choices in lieu of developing a strong academic foundation during the first two years of high school. Gratification seems to occur with the knowledge that the student has reached junior year with a sense of social awareness and academic command. Senior year is viewed as a time for reaping the benefits of consistent hard work and enjoying activities and friends.

This study shows that students are eager to share their thoughts, opinions and concerns in an honest and straight forward manner if there is an attempt made to communicate with and listen to their ideas and views. The students who participated in this study did not set as a condition that changes be made in the procedures used in House B, however, the implication to the researcher has been that students were willing to participate with the expectation that this study would not be an end unto itself. There is a sense that the House Administrator must have a level of credibility such that students can assume that there is worth in their participation in this, or any other, adult initiated activity.

Recommendations

The major recommendation that can be made as a result of having done this study should involve a follow through procedure. The one way communication line can begin to branch out by giving students and teachers the information gathered in this study. The findings of the questionnaires and interviews are essential information for the students in House B since they constitute the largest affected group. This feedback should be organized in a way that allows enough time for students and staff to assimilate the report. Secondly, there is a need for time and a forum for discussion among students and staff independently and then

with each other. The administrators of the House are cast in the roles of on-lookers and facilitators with the charge of active observation.

The House Administrator should develop an action plan that will allow for goal-setting around the areas of concern that can be considered short range, with the idea of showing the feasibility of group involvement as a way of augmenting the decision-making routine within the House.

Where possible the development and implementation of ideas expressed or endorsed by students in this study, such as increased recognition of students achievement, goal-setting activities for students and subsequent academic planning, should be instituted.

By examining existing structures and practices presently used in House B, the House Administrator may be able to provide more opportunities for students and teachers to interact, outside of the normal classroom atmosphere, to the extent that both groups can gain greater insights into their abilities to relate to each other.

Similarly, the House Administrator's role would be greatly enhanced by making a concerted effort to interact with students around issues other than the traditional disciplinary level. Sharing perspectives and high visibility are two major areas that lend themselves to increased involvement with students.

It is the hope of this researcher that this study will

serve to encourage other House or Program Administrators to initiate lines of communication with their student groups.

The process used in this study involved the development and use of a questionnaire, as well as, personal interviews between the researcher and students. Both mechanisms proved to be very positive methods for obtaining the desired information. The questionnaire allowed for complete anonymity of the respondent while providing a vehicle for sharing perspectives and opinions. With modifications, the tool can be used in varied settings and can be as specific or general as needed to better fit the purpose of the researcher's inquiry.

The individual interviews with students were extremely helpful although replication may be hindered greatly by time constraints. The incorporation of open-ended questions into the survey format should afford the practitioner a better glimpse into the more personal, experiential aspects of student life.

It is not necessary to buy into the idea of student involvement in decision-making; nor should it be seen as just another tool for evaluating a program, House, or administrative team. Rather, it should be viewed as an opportunity to stay in touch with the young people whose intellectual, psychological and emotional growth we are influencing on a daily basis through administrative planning and decision-making.

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