



RETURNING MATERIALS:
Place in book drop to
remove this checkout from
your record. FINES will
be charged if book is
returned after the date
stamped below.

SEP 04 '85 2 R K 25 R NOV 17 '87 66 K 20 JAN 25 '88 26 K 27 APR 6 '88 85 K 98	JUN 16 '88 20 K 167 AUG 25 '88 100 G 222 MAR 31 2002 028 102	JUN 25 '87 49 R 177 DEC 5 '88 500 A 088
--	--	---

4074385

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING
STUDENT, PARENT, AND STAFF ADJUSTMENTS CREATED
BY THE CLOSING OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By

Sally Mulder Edgerton

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Teacher Education

1986

ABSTRACT

AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE FACTORS AFFECTING
STUDENT, PARENT, AND STAFF ADJUSTMENTS CREATED
BY THE CLOSING OF AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

By

Sally Mulder Edgerton

From 1983 to 1985, an ethnographic study was undertaken to investigate the adjustments of students, parents, and staff members experiencing an elementary school consolidation following a school closing. The school community was located in a midwestern urban school district and had experienced a school closure due to declining student enrollments and the maintenance of fiscal responsibility.

The transferred community was studied primarily through participant observations and interviews. In addition, a sociometric questionnaire, student and teacher journals, key informant student workshops, school documents, and students' performance on a standardized achievement test were all used to establish key linkages in the adjustment process of the students, parents, and staff members.

Events in the school closing such as community hearings, a final school program, and student visitations to receiving schools were instrumental in easing students' and parents' transition in schools.

Sally Mulder Edgerton

The school merger was facilitated with the simultaneous transfer of the school principal, secretary, four teachers, and one-fifth of the student body. Students were observed to be the most resilient, and after time, established friendships in and out of the classrooms. Older students experienced stronger ties to the closed school than younger students. Academic performance of the transferred student body was not affected by the closing or the consolidation process.

In time, the primarily white parents adjusted to the busing of their children to a school selected to maintain racial balance within the school district. Parents appreciated the transfer of familiar school personnel. Resident parents also experienced a period of adjustment to the new community and administration. Frequent school communications and the Parent Teacher Association helped establish positive community support.

Staff members experienced the greatest resistance to change. A smooth physical move, immediate active involvement in the school's educational program, and satisfaction in grade placement were instrumental in creating positive adjustments in the staff. Both resident and transferred staff members needed time to adjust to the consolidated community and faculty. The transferred school principal

Sally Mulder Edgerton

played an important role in creating a unified faculty and positive school climate.

EVERGREEN SCHOOL

DESTINED FOR CLOSURE - JUNE 17, 1983

DATE: February 10, 1983

TIME: 11:25 a.m. - Lunch time

JEFF, A first grader: "What are they going to do with this
school when it goes out of business?"

TEACHER: "I really don't know."

JEFF: "Well, I want to buy it!"

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many outstanding individuals provided support and guidance in the completion of my doctoral program and dissertation. My warmest appreciation is extended to my committee chairperson, Dr. Sheila Fitzgerald. Dr. Fitzgerald provided unlimited patience throughout my studies. Special gratitude is extended to my committee members, Dr. William Cole, Dr. Majorie Kostelnik, Dr. Richard Navaro, and Dr. William Walsh. Dr. Navaro was particularly helpful in guiding the ethnographic research.

Many members of the teaching profession offered continuous support throughout my studies. I am especially grateful to Dorothy Ling, David Cross, James Ewing, Betty Javoroski, and Barbara Tate. They provided unending support and understanding in my undertaking.

Over the years, members of my family have patiently supported my studies. I am grateful to my husband, Greg, and my children, Lisa and Michael, for their continuous assistance, patience, and love. Special appreciation is offered to my parents, Robert and Kathryn Crozier.

A final expression of gratitude is extended to the elementary children, the ultimate reason for this research in education.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
LIST OF TABLES	viii
LIST OF FIGURES	x
Chapter	
I. THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: POLITICS OF SCHOOL CLOSINGS	1
Statement of the Problem	4
Importance of the Study	7
Literature on School Closings	9
Ethnography of Schools	14
An Ecological Framework	16
II. THE RESEARCH DESIGN	22
Introduction: The Process of Inquiry	22
Data Collection: Fieldwork	24
Role of the Researcher/Teacher	26
Research Questions	30
Rationale for the Decision to Study	
Woodhaven	32
Methods of Data Collection	34
Participant Observation	34
Interviews	35
Small-Group Student Workshops	38
School Documents	41
Sociometric Questionnaire	42
Journals	43
Academic Achievement	44
Geneology: The Involved Schools and the	
Population of the Study	45
Format of the Ethnographic Report	52
III. A SCHOOL CLOSING: EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL.	54
Evergreen School, A Rich Historical	
Background	54
School Boundary Changes	60

	Page
The First Hearing	63
The Second Hearing	68
A Final School Activity: "Link to the Past"	
Vignette	69
Visitations to the New Schools	73
Staff Members' Resistance to Change	76
The Adjustment Period	78
The Last Day at Evergreen: A First-Grade	
Classroom Vignette	80
Summary	82
IV. A SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION: WOODHAVEN ELEMENTARY	
SCHOOL	85
Overview of the Geographical Location	85
School Population of Woodhaven	86
School Community	87
Influence of the Federal Courts	88
Physical Setting: Spatial Mapping	89
A Place in Time: Temporal Mapping	93
School's Participants: Social Mapping	94
Students	94
Parents	97
Staff	97
Support Staff	98
Summary	100
V. THE ADJUSTMENTS OF STUDENTS	101
Introduction: Key Assertions	101
Findings From Literature	103
Positive Effects of Transferred School	
Personnel on Student Adjustment	106
Factors in the Adjustment of Transferred	
Students	109
Breaking the Ties to Evergreen	109
Role of Busing	111
Adjustments of the Resident Students	114
Development of Friendship Patterns Outside	
the Classroom	116
Development of Friendship Patterns Within	
the Classroom	119
Findings From Sociometry	119
Findings From Student Journals	123
Small-Group Workshops	131
National Evergreen Day	134
Older Students: A More Difficult Process of	
School Adjustment	138

	Page
VIII. Students' Academic Performance	142
Summary	148
VI. THE ADJUSTMENTS OF PARENTS	151
Introduction: Key Assertions	151
The Strange Becomes Familiar	154
The Positive Effect of the School Personnel	157
Time to Adjust: The Need to Maintain Past Attachments	161
An Element of Safety: The Provision of Bus Transportation	165
The Neighborhood School Concept: Maintaining Racial Balance	166
Adjustments of the Resident Parents	168
Positive Effects of School Communications	175
Summary	179
VII. THE ADJUSTMENTS OF STAFF MEMBERS	182
Introduction: Key Assertions	182
Transfer of Staff Members	185
Physical Move	185
Time to Adjust	188
Effect of Grade-Level Placement in Job Satisfaction	195
Resistance to Change: Weakest in Children, Stronger in Parents, Strongest in Staff	200
Staff Involvement: The First Semester	203
Assimilation Into the Educational Community	205
A Cooperative Relationship With the Transferred Administration	207
The Resident Staff	208
A Conflict in the Local Teacher Association Representation	212
Perceptions of the Resident Staff	214
Interactions Among All Staff Members	218
Developing a Feeling of Belonging and a Sense of Trust: The Second Year	222
Social Network	226
School Climate	236
Summary	240

	Page
VIII. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	242
Summary	242
The Closing of an Elementary School	243
A Transition in Schools	245
Conclusions	248
The School Closing	248
A Review of Outcomes	250
Implications	256
Recommendations for Further Research	261
Concluding Remarks	263
APPENDICES	
A. CHRONOLOGY	266
B. STEPS LEADING TO ADOPTION OF REVISED ELEMENTARY BOUNDARIES	267
C. GLOSSARY OF SCHOOLS AND INTERVIEWED PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND STAFF MEMBERS	268
D. MEMO TO STAFF: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS	272
E. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENT PARTICIPANTS IN SMALL-GROUP WORKSHOPS	273
F. CONSENT LETTERS	274
G. SOCIOMETRY	277
H. STUDENT JOURNALS	283
BIBLIOGRAPHY	292
GENERAL RESOURCES	300
1.2 Comparative Ranking of Teachers' Perceptions on Sociometric Perceptions by Grade in Grade: September 1983 and May 1984 278 1.3 Percent of Change in Rank Order of Perceptions Students on Sociometric Perceptions from September 1983 to May 1984 280	

LIST OF TABLES

Table		Page
2.1	Table of Interviews: 1983-84 School Year . . .	37
2.2	Small-Group Workshops: Transferred Student Composition	40
2.3	Small-Group Workshops: Resident Student Composition	40
3.1	Declining Enrollments at Evergreen School . . .	56
3.2	Tenure of Teachers at Evergreen	58
3.3	Tenure of Principals at Evergreen	59
3.4	Reassignment of Elementary School Attendance Areas to Maintain Racial Balance	62
4.1	Woodhaven Student Population: Transferred and Resident Majority and Minority Students . . .	96
4.2	Tenure of Teachers at Woodhaven	98
5.1	Classification of Topics Discussed in the Fourth-Grade Journal Entries	125
5.2	Classification of Topics Discussed in the First-Grade Journals	129
5.3	Results of Statistical Tests of Woodhaven Students' Academic Performance	146
A.1	A Sample Ranking of Transferred Students on Sociometric Questions	278
A.2	Comparative Ranking of Transferred Students on Sociometric Questions According to Grade: September 1983 and May 1984	279
A.3	Percent of Change in Rank Order of Transferred Students on Sociometric Questions From September 1983 to May 1984	280

Table	Page
A.4 Comparative Ranking of Resident Students on Sociometric Questions According to Grade: September 1983 and May 1984	281
A.5 Percentage of Change in Rank Order of Resident Students on Sociometric Questions From September 1983 to May 1984	282

Figure

2.1 Place of Birth of Resident Students	47
2.2 Number of Children of Resident Students	48
3.1 Date of Birth of Resident Students	48
3.2 Age of Resident Students	49
4.1 Ethnicity of Resident Students	51
4.2 Class of Resident Students	51
7.1 Social Behavior of Resident Students in September 1983	213
7.2 Social Behavior of Resident Students in May 1984	213

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Dissemination of Evergreen Staff and Students	47
2.2 Woodhaven Staff and Student Population Involved in the Study	48
2.3 List of Participants Mentioned in the 1983 Study of Evergreen	49
2.4 List of Participants Mentioned in the 1983-85 Study of Woodhaven	50
4.1 Woodhaven School	91
4.2 Classrooms in Woodhaven School	92
7.1 Social Network of Woodhaven Staff: September 1983	233
7.2 Social Network of Woodhaven Staff: January 1985	235

CHAPTER I

THE RESEARCH PROBLEM: POLITICS OF SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Many of the economic concerns that educators were forced to consider during the 1970s have escalated significantly and been dramatized in the 1980s. School districts throughout the country have had to adapt to double-digit inflation and an ever-increasing belt-tightening economy (Abramowitz & Rosenfeld, 1978; Boyd, 1979; Cuban, 1979). Suburban, rural, and urban school districts have been forced to plead their plight to a disenchanted public responsible for carrying the financial burden for education (Dean, 1981; Watchtel & Powers, 1979).

In light of a tight economy, increasing inflation, and growing millage requests, school districts have been required to trim expenditures sharply (Fowler, 1980; Odden & Vincent, 1979). In the process of cutting expenditures, school districts have needed to demonstrate to the public their plans for maintaining a balanced budget (Fowler, 1980; Grant, 1982).

Inflation required school districts to evaluate the costs of personnel, energy, and maintenance, three of the areas in which costs continued to spiral upward (Abramowitz

& Rosenfeld, 1979; Brodinsky, 1981). Increased costs of heating and salaries of school personnel were coupled with another factor of grave concern to education--declining enrollments. As enrollments declined and costs per pupil continued to rise, many school districts recognized a new problem--the surplus space in secondary and elementary schools (Brodinsky, 1981; Gorden & Hughes, 1980; Grant, 1982; Sargent, 1974; Zerchikow, 1982).

After students from the post-World War II baby boom graduated from high school, the high enrollments of the 1960s could not be maintained. Enrollment in the elementary grades peaked in 1969 and then declined sharply throughout the 1970s and early 1980s (Bishop, 1979; Michigan Department of Education, 1977; NSBA, 1976; Sargent, 1974;). In the 1970s, schools, especially elementary schools, were partially filled with students. As costs of maintaining and equipping buildings continued to rise at a blistering pace, the cost of educating fewer students in these buildings also increased. In evaluating their present and future financial situations, many school boards maintained that an efficient and necessary cost-cutting measure was to close some underused elementary and secondary schools (Brodinsky, 1981; Watchtel & Powers, 1977; Zerchikow, 1982).

In the 1970s, the management of decline was a political process unknown in public education. As school district's financial resources fell victim to inflation,

declining student enrollments compounded the problem and resulted in potentially stressful situations, often political in nature (Cuban, 1979; Iannoccone, 1979). The policy-making process that followed in many school districts started with the definition of the problem of declining enrollments and ended with the eventual decision to close schools (Boyd, 1979). Iannoccone (1979) described this procedure as one that involved policies of technical efficiency and political input.

Iannoccone noted that the issue of declining enrollments was a problem of management of political conflict, a policy-process problem. As school districts reviewed their individual situations, the most common decision was to close elementary schools. The decision to close schools, however, was frequently an unpopular one (Abramowitz & Rosenfeld, 1979; Wachtel & Powers, 1979). In some cases in which conflict and tensions developed, those conflicts had been present within the involved community before the school-closing issue arose (Berger, 1982; Boyd, 1979). As the issue of declining enrollment evolved, issues that had lain dormant within the community became central to the issue of enrollment declines and affected the decision-making process (Iannoccone, 1979).

The primary avenue for effectively managing the closing of schools was appropriate timing. Time provided the concerned community a period to absorb forthcoming school declining enrollments.

closings, to debate the political issues, and to generate input into the decision-making process (Berger, 1982; Iannoccone, 1979).

A series of events such as these led to the closing of several schools in Lincoln, the midwestern urban city that was the setting of this study. In June 1983, Evergreen Elementary School was closed by the Lincoln School District. Evergreen students and staff were transferred to three different neighborhood elementary schools. The researcher who was also a teacher at Evergreen was transferred along with a portion of the Evergreen staff and students to one of the receiving schools, Woodhaven Elementary School. This study examines the events that occurred when one neighborhood school, Evergreen, was closed and some of its faculty, students, and parents were required to adapt to a new school environment, Woodhaven Elementary School.

In the process of conducting a descriptive study of the staff, parents, and students in an elementary school, it is necessary to protect the anonymity of all participants. Therefore, the names of the city, school district, schools, and all participants have been changed to ensure confidentiality.

Statement of the Problem

Closing a school is a result of the policy processes that a school district develops to meet the demands of declining enrollments. An issue that many public school

administrators have had to address is the declining need for the number of schools in operation within a school system. The results of closing schools, however, extend beyond the administrative issues of management and economy to the individual school communities. Unfortunately, the effects of school closings on the total school community have received little attention in the professional literature, other than recommendations for ways school districts can meet social pressures and community resistance to the closings (Boyd, 1979; Pauline & Petruzzello, 1982; Zerchykow, 1982).

How the school community accepts a school closing is the school district's responsibility (McGlothlin, 1981). What happens to the school community after a school closes is also the school's responsibility, but this issue rarely is considered or investigated. As Cuban (1979) pointed out, the literature on declining enrollments and school closings has comprised little more than "cookbooks giving recipes to administrators on how to avoid the task of community anger or research on the technology of projections" (p. 389). As most of the published literature has focused on "how to" close schools, many important questions have yet to be uncovered, and the full political effect of school closings and consolidations has yet to be revealed.

A sampling of issues that warrant an examination was reviewed by Cuban (1979), who asked:

1. What are the instructional and organizational effects on an aging staff?

2. Do teachers who are forced to shift schools benefit or suffer damage?
3. Do budget cuts in programs improve the prime instructional mission of the school system?
4. Does community conflict over shrinking enrollments lead to an examination of educational priorities?
5. Have closed schools affected children positively or negatively, both or neither? (p.392)

It is the fifth question with which this researcher was primarily concerned. As Cuban continued in his discussion of questions for further research,

Few, if any, researchers have investigated students who transferred to other schools to see what changes, if any have occurred. Academic achievement, attitudes towards school, leadership performance, and dozens of other indicators would be useful guides to discover answers to these questions. (p.392)

Bussard (1981) also discussed the need to study the transition that students, parents, and school personnel must make following school closings:

Probably, too, school districts should document the experiences of children and parents a year or two after the school closing. An enormous amount of publicity is generated during the decision to close a school, much of it negative. However, most children, parents and teachers adapt well to new circumstances (if community divisions are not so great as to be unbridgeable). Parents can make a positive contribution by monitoring the transition and experiences in the new schools and providing guidance on improving transitions in the future. (p.38)

In writing of his experiences as a superintendent, Thomas (1980), concurred with Bussard and Cuban:

Further, the problems associated with school closures are not educational; they are human. Educational leaders must be skilled in responding

to the "people problems" when faced with fewer and fewer students. (p.21)

In gaining an understanding of what happens to the school community as a result of a school closing, the need for future research was clearly voiced by Bussard, Cuban, and Thomas. Recent professional literature on the topic has offered many examples of how school systems have met and tackled the problem of declining enrollments. Many districts have shared the procedures that they followed in the successful, or sometimes unsuccessful, closing of schools--their only feasible alternative to declining enrollments. The implication of Cuban, Bussard, and Thomas's hypotheses, however, is that current research has not followed the issue of closing schools to gain an understanding of the full effects of a closure on the entire community of students, parents, and school staff. Information on how a community adjusts to a new educational setting could offer school districts faced with declining enrollments and possible school closures valuable insights into successfully closing a school. The scope of this ethnographic study, therefore, concerns how students, parents, and school personnel adjusted to the consolidation of schools after an elementary school closing necessitated by declining enrollments.

Importance of the Study

A political decision to close a school does not come to a conclusion when the school doors are closed. Much of

what transpires during the final hours of a closing and the beginning hours of a consolidation is stressful to the community and often political to school districts. Conducting indepth fieldwork research of an elementary school whose students and staff personnel were displaced as a result of that school's closure provides an opportunity to identify the positive and negative factors influencing adjustment to a new school community. To understand the effects of a school closing, one must follow the transferred school community to determine their adjustments and their acceptance by the receiving school community. Perhaps the insights gleaned from such a study will contribute to a more successful implementation of future school closings. Unfortunately the literature is sorely lacking in follow-through research on the effects of school closings. Yet the final chapter of a school closing is, in effect, the beginning of a new chapter in the experience at a receiving school.

Ethnographic research offers an opportunity to identify the adjustments of the school community in detail, and it provides many opportunities to test theoretical implications and hypotheses. The purpose of this study was to identify the behaviors of students, parents, and staff members within the school community. How the transferred and receiving community members adjusted to the new school situation was the focus of this research.

The researcher, who was also an Evergreen teacher, had an important advantage because a pilot ethnographic study on the closing school, Evergreen, had been conducted during the school's final six months. By comparing data from the initial study with the results of the research at Woodhaven, a better understanding of the student, parent, and staff adjustments experienced in transferring to a new school was gained.

Declining enrollments are likely to continue in Lincoln School District, the setting for this study, and necessitate future school closings. The identification of student, parent, and staff behaviors should help the Lincoln school system and educator's in other urban school districts understand the adjustments the school's participants underwent in the closing and consolidating of schools.

Literature on School Closings

In the 1970s and 1980s, the phenomenon of closing schools in urban school systems developed in response to the actions of school officials dealing with declining student enrollments and fiscal responsibility. The major focus of the literature on closing schools is on political forces affecting school districts as school officials implement school closure policies (Cibulka, 1982; Dembowski & Gay, 1980; McLennan, 1981; Tyler, 1982; Zerchykow, 1981).

Unfortunately, the reports of school closures in the educational literature have been based on little empirical

research (Berger, 1982; Cibulka, 1982). Zerchykow (1982) provided a thorough review of the limited literature on school districts' policy responses to declining enrollments. In this review, Zerchykow presented an overview of the kinds of literature identified, a summary of the main policy issues identified in the literature, a codification of the professional consensus on how best to manage decline, a review of research on management of and adjustment to decline, and a discussion of the policy implications of research findings.

As Zerchykow (1982), Cuban (1979), Berger (1982), and Divoky (1979); pointed out, the literature has stressed a "how to" approach to school closures. Zerchykow (1982) stated:

Advice is prominent in the literature. We have discovered the emergence of a definite professional consensus, a "craftlore" of writings about good practices in retrenching. This advice is typically found in professional association periodicals and is codified in handbooks, often sponsored by professional associations and/or state education agencies. While not typically based on generalizable research evidence, this literature is no less empirical in so far as much of it is written as observations, caveats, suggestions, and "memorabilia" from the firing line. (p.xiii)

Berger (1982) wrote a four part analysis of the literature on communities and their protest of school closings. In reference to school boards' decision-making process, he stated:

The first perspective states that comprehensive, deliberate planning techniques are preferred to

less-systematic, short-term planning processes. Essentially, this means that districts experiencing enrollment decline should collect and analyze data and this effort, in turn, will produce organizational responses which will be acceptable to all parties. Technical rationality, in other words, will identify the "one best solution" for everyone concerned.

(p. 3)

Research supporting this analysis was conducted by Bishop (1979), Burns (1978), Bussard (1981), and Sargent and Hardy (1974).

Concerning the second element of his analysis, Berger related:

The second perspective argues that greater credibility and commitment are generated, and less resistance to change occurs when people are involved in decisions that affect them. This theory suggests that board members and administrators should broaden participation in the school closing process. The appeal of this argument is that it promises to reduce the inevitable tension between policy-makers and those who will be affected by policy decisions.

(p. 5)

The advisability of allowing the community to participate in closure decisions was supported by the findings of Allopenna (1977), Bishop (1979), Eisenberger (1974, 1975), Fowler (1980), Sargent and Hardy (1974), and Thomas (1980).

Berger continued with an analysis of the literature describing communities' responses to closing schools:

The third view on community opposition contends that schools are perceived not only as instruments for education, but also as the means for other non-education functions as well. When resistance occurs, it stems not from a loss of the educational aspects of particular facilities;

it comes instead from the sense of loss of the functions and relations which bind the community together and maintain its identity. (p. 6)

Berger concluded his report with findings related to the effect of the environment on the closing school community. He wrote:

For over three decades, the dominant thinking in the management literature has been that the environment poses significant contingencies and constraints for organization behavior. While the specification of environmental variables continues to be debated, it is logical to assume that community opposition will be conditioned, in part, by the contextual characteristics of the district itself. (pp.7-8)

The limited empirical research on school closure has been directed primarily to educational policy management processes (Boyd, 1979; Burlingame, 1979; Colton & Frelich, 1979; Cuban, 1979; Dean, 1981; Valencia, 1980; Zerchykow, 1982). Iannoccone (1979) pointed out, "The stress of declining enrollments does not create a new politics of education" (p. 430). He stressed that important elements of the problem are educational administrators who are either unaware of recent studies on political-conflict-management processes or have in the past been ineffectual in using existing knowledge to address the problem of declining enrollments.

Follow-through research on the effects of a school closing is almost nonexistent in the educational literature, although Zerchykow (1982) did discuss the effect of school closings on the individuals and neighborhoods involved.

There is also little evidence, again despite the newsmaking headlines, of any dramatic impact, either upon children's schooling experiences or school community-relations, of retrenchment decisions, especially those leading to school closure:

1. There is no documented long-term impact of school closure on children's cognitive or emotional-social development.
2. The impact of school closings on neighborhood quality of life appears to defy objective measurement. Survey data on residents' perceptions of the impact of schooling is mixed.
3. There is no general evidence of any negative perceptions leading to behavior--lower levels of electoral support for school levies, or flight to private education, for example--manifesting public disenchantment with the schools as a result of retrenchment decisions. (p. xi)

The only research cited by Zerchykow (1982) that related to students' attitudes toward a school closing was a report by Richards and Cohen on elementary school children's responses to school closings in Ithaca, New York. The researchers collected data through individual interviews, interviewer ratings, sociometric tests, parents questionnaires, and teacher evaluations. Their results indicated that the 143 children in the study population did respond negatively to anticipated or actual school closings. Children anticipating a school merger were most negative (80%), students who attended the school that hosted the new students were least negative, (35%) and those who had experienced a school closure nine months earlier were somewhat negative (70%). The students' reaction to a school closing was both negative and persistent, but it was not related significantly to age, sex, popularity, or how well

the children liked school in general. The children's reactions were not necessarily related to their parents' responses or to how well the children performed in school academically, socially, or emotionally. With a view to the limited research on the effects of a school closing on students, the following research was formulated and framed within an ethnographic approach.

Ethnography of Schools

Because of the dearth of literature and research on the effects of a school closing on students, parents, and staff members, the researcher sought other sources that were relevant to an ethnographic study within an elementary school. Writings by Erickson (1979), Jackson (1968), Kantor and Lehr (1975), Ogbu (1981), Spindler (1980), and Spradley and Mann (1975) contributed to the conceptual framework for the inquiry on the effects of a school closing.

Erickson (1979) laid the framework for ethnography in education with his description of the inquiry process used in fieldwork settings. In The Cocktail Waitress, Spradley and Mann (1975) presented insights into the study of a field situation and offered opportunities to compare and analyze the activities of participants in a micro-setting. In Life in the Classroom, Jackson (1968) provided insightful comparisons within a particular setting, in this case a school situation.

The study of adjustments following a school transfer may be allied to the research by Kantor and Lehr (1975) of the theoretical underpinnings of family ecosystems. The authors proposed several theories on family ecosystems, using an ethnographic research design. They maintained that a family ecosystem revolves around the access dimensions of time, space, and energy, as well as the target dimensions of affect, power, and meaning. The similarities in theoretical analyses of family ecosystems and staff personnel in an elementary school are striking.

The relevance of Kantor and Lehr's research to the conceptual framework of this study is that the concepts of target and access dimensions may be directly related to interactions within an elementary school. The target dimensions described by Kantor and Lehr included affect--intimacy and nurturance exchanges; meaning--ideas and the communication of ideas within the social, spiritual, conceptual, and material world; and power--a goal seeking behavior that focuses on the aspects of freedom and restraint within an organization. The access dimensions include the influences that time, space, and the use of physical and informational energies have on the social network of an elementary school staff. Kantor and Lehr's analyses of family ecosystems provided a comparative framework in which to understand the participants in a school setting.

In an ethnography of schools, Ogbu's (1981) research on minority children in California provided insights into the interrelationships between the school and other settings in a larger society. Ogbu's work demonstrated the importance of the interconnections between the school, family, and neighborhood and the economic conditions and community attitudes in school effectiveness. His research stressed the importance of the field setting and its participants within an ecological framework.

An Ecological Framework

Bronfenbrenner (1979) provided an ecological framework upon which the conceptual framework of this ethnographic research study on school closings was based. He described a theoretical foundation for the ecology of human development. In his theory, the human being and his/her changes and growth within an immediate setting are affected by the interrelationships within the context of larger settings.

In Bronfenbrenner's theoretical framework of the ecological environment, a nested arrangement of concentric structures is conceived. He describes a single immediate setting as a microsystem. In a microsystem, individuals experience activities, play roles, and participate in interpersonal relations within a particular physical and material setting. Bronfenbrenner stated that "experience,"

in a microsystem, is important in understanding how participants perceived the activities.

In this study of a school consolidation, observations of many microsystems were conducted to better understand the adjustments of the students, parents, and staff members. A classroom at Evergreen School, the playground at Woodhaven School, and an all-school ice cream social are examples of the settings in which the researcher observed the activities, roles, and interpersonal relations of the students, parents, and staff members.

Next on the ecological structure is a system of microsystems that Bronfenbrenner terms mesosystems. A mesosystem involves the developing person who participates in interrelationships among two or more settings. For example, the transferred Evergreen students actively participated in the former Evergreen School, home settings, neighborhood peer groups, and the receiving Woodhaven School. The interrelationships of transferred staff members included participation in both closing and receiving schools, and other outside activities such as staff get-togethers.

The mesosystems studied in this research project included Evergreen School and Woodhaven School. Interconnections among the participants in the settings, the intermediate links in the social networks, formal and informal communications, and the attitudes of the

participants toward the settings were major elements in the participant observations conducted in this study.

Bronfenbrenner describes the next larger design in the ecological framework, the exosystem. In an exosystem, events that occur affect, or are affected by, individuals, but the exosystem does not involve the developing person in all aspects of it. The setting of Woodhaven and Evergreen are examples of exosystems which affected but did not always involve each developing student, parent, or staff member.

The exosystem helps explain the interrelationships of the transferred and resident parents, the relationships between the transferred and resident staff members, and the interactions among the students. The Lincoln School District, surrounding neighborhood school communities, and the local media were also influencing exosystems.

The macrosystem is the broadest point in the hierarchy of the ecological framework. Bronfenbrenner refers to the macrosystem as the level of the subculture or culture. Belief systems and ideologies underly the macrosystem which takes into account the micro-, meso-, and exosystems. The macrosystem, too, was influential in this study. A prime example of the macrosystem is the role of the federal court and court ordered integration of the Lincoln School District. Significantly, the federal court and its role was felt strongly by the Evergreen and Woodhaven exosystems.

Within the structure of the ecological framework may occur an ecological transition which has particular relevance to this study. An ecological transition, according to Bronfenbrenner, occurs whenever an individual's relationship in the ecological environment is changed as the result of a change in role, setting, or both. The transfer of the principal and a portion of the Evergreen School community from Evergreen to Woodhaven School was an ecological transition for students, parents, and staff members in both the transferred and resident communities. In fact, the bulk of the research report describes the affects of ecological transitions on the involved community. These transitions are interconnected and intertwined in a complex series of interactions.

Another point made by Bronfenbrenner for establishing ecological validity has particular relevance to the researcher's role in conducting a valid ethnographic study in a school where she was also a teacher. Bronfenbrenner discussed the environmental content of research, ecological validity, in referring to the role of scientific investigation and the supposed assumed properties of the subjects as related by an investigator. To meet the demands of validity the role of participant observer/teacher constantly scrutinized her roles in the micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems.

In emphasizing ecological validity in micro-, meso-, exo-, and macrosystems, Bronfenbrenner (1979:33) describes Cole's analysis of the research subject and settings. Cole substantiated the researcher's role as a participant in a study. He gives credence to the observer who participates with other involved individuals, experiencing the subculture of the setting. Cole relates that the opportunities for errors or misinterpretations are reduced when the investigator also participates in the setting. In the following chapter on research design, the role of researcher/teacher in this study is described within an ethnographic framework. It is noted that Cole's analysis of ecological validity follows closely the researcher's stated advantage of being part of the transfer process at Evergreen and Woodhaven schools.

In ecological research, Bronfenbrenner describes the interdependence of individuals and their environment, the structure of the environmental settings, and the processes within and between the settings. It is within this ecological design that the researcher formulated the conceptual framework for the study. This ethnographic research is strengthened by the theoretical foundations of Bronfenbrenner's ecology of human development. It is a way of looking at the research and interrelating the multiple micro-, meso-, and exosystems operating in the school consolidation process. Also, insights gathered from

educational school management research and writings on ethnographies of schools contributed to an understanding of the transfer and consolidation adjustments of a school community confronted with a school closing.

CHAPTER II

THE RESEARCH DESIGN

Introduction: The Process of Inquiry

This study of the adjustments of students, parents, and staff members transferring to a new school after a school closing employed the research method used in ethnographic research. Spindler (1982) described an ethnography as the discovery of "cultural knowledge possessed by people as natives (members of groups or communities), as well as the ways in which this cultural knowledge is used in social interaction" (p. 458). The goal of ethnography is to focus on a setting and to discover what is happening there (Wolcott, 1975).

In a review of ethnographies and their application to the study of schooling, Wilcox (1982) identified five key characteristics that are central to the ethnographic-research process. First, the researcher needs to set aside preconceptions or stereotypes about what is occurring and explore the setting as it was viewed and constructed by its participants. Second, the researcher must make the familiar strange, as if viewing it for the first time, to note what is taken for granted and to question why an event takes place. Third, the relationship between the setting and its

context should be recognized to understand why events occur as they do. Fourth, the researcher uses knowledge of existing social theory to guide and inform his/her observations. Fifth, the research needs to be initiated without predetermined categories of observation, questionnaires, or precise hypotheses. Wilcox (1982) concluded,

The researcher is constantly drawing on relevant bodies of theory and knowledge to move the research process forward, to assess the significance of what s/he has seen and heard, to develop specific hypotheses and categories of observation, and continually to refocus and redefine the process of study. (p. 460)

In collecting data in an ethnography, the researcher uses an inductive approach. Theory is developed from the bottom up, "from many disparate pieces of collected evidence that are interconnected" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982 p. 29). The hypotheses in the study are developed while the research is being conducted. Data are not gathered to prove or disprove a theory, but rather to form an interconnected set of concerns or hypotheses. This approach results in what Glaser and Strauss (1967) termed grounded theory.

The process of consolidating a section of a closed school community with a receiving school community in an urban school district can be studied by means of ethnographic research. Filling (1980) described the potential of ethnographic research to provide an understanding of the problems of urban schools and the

effect of classroom environments on urban education. He suggested three considerations for ethnographic research that are central to the problems of urban schools. First, he viewed the issue of improving education in terms of only academic achievement as ineffectual. Second, an understanding of the relationships among societal factors, classroom behaviors, and output variables such as academic achievement can be gained through ethnographic research. Third, the ethnographies can be used to describe the interactions between cultural characteristics and classroom behaviors. Filling stated, "Conceptually, ethnographic research suggests that without knowledge and experience within the social milieu of a community, no realistic evaluation or understanding of the critical factors operating on people in that community can be made" (p. 273).

Data Collection: Fieldwork

Fieldwork research on the adjustments of a school community following a school closing was initiated during the final year at Evergreen School. As Erickson (1973) pointed out, fieldwork study in schools should be conducted as an inductive inquiry. Inquiry in the field is done through a triangulation approach, whereby data are gathered from several sources. After gathering a wide variety of data, cross-validations can be conducted (Bogdan & Biklin, 1981; Erickson, 1973). Data for this study were collected from participant observations, interviews, student and

teacher journals, and pertinent documents such as communications from the principal, the parent-teacher association, and the central office of the school district.

An ethnographic report provides vivid descriptions of the field situation. Disconfirming evidence was collected and analyzed. Data inconsistent with the key linkages were documented and presented so that the researcher could substantiate the possibility of replicating the study (Erickson, 1973,1979).

Conducting the inquiry within a field situation provided the researcher with opportunities to collect data through both explicit and implicit questioning processes. Erickson (1973) described an ethnography in schools as a questioning process. The ethnographer has the advantage of learning about the field situation by actually being in the situation. The ability to view the situation and concomitant behavior in the field, in this case the closing and receiving school settings, facilitates the discovery of a wide variety of human behaviors (Erickson, 1973,1979).

Essential components of the fieldwork were interviews with teachers, administrators, and parents during the 1983-84 school year. Initially, a series of questions guided the interviews, and other relevant questions arose during the interview process. Open-ended interviews were used to encourage the flow of thoughts from the interviewees (Gorden,1980; Spradley, 1979).

Student data were collected through participant observations, student journals, and discussions with a small group of students used as key informants (Graves, 1982; Schatzman & Straus, 1973; Sitton, 1980; Spradley, 1979). Additional data were gathered from relevant school documents, standardized tests, and sociometric questions (Almy, 1974, Bennett, 1981).

The present inquiry was guided by several questions that Erickson (1973) said need to be asked when conducting ethnographies. They include:

- How did you arrive at your overall point of view?
- What details did you leave out and what did you leave in?
- What was your rationale for selection?
- From the universe of behavior available to you, how much did you monitor?
- Why did you monitor behavior in some situations and not others? (p. 13)

These questions helped guide the data-collection process developed by the researcher as a participant observer.

Role of Researcher/Teacher

The major technique used in the fieldwork was participant observation (Schatzman & Straus, 1973; Spindler, 1982). The researcher was a teacher at Evergreen and gathered data during its final year. She was also a teacher at Woodhaven School, so observations were made throughout the 1983-84 school year and into the first semester of the 1984-85 school year. Hymes (1979) recognized a need for the participant observer to develop trust and confidence among

members of the field. He felt that developing trust and confidence could outweigh and compensate for any potential participant partiality. With this in mind, the researcher attempted to gather as much relevant data as possible taking advantage of the positive attributes of the roles of both observer and participant (Sitton, 1980).

Myrdal (1969) suggested: "There is no other device for excluding biases in social sciences than to face the valuations and to introduce them as explicitly stated, specific and sufficiently concretized value premises" (p. 103). In this investigation, the researcher attempted to be aware of the subjectivity implicit in the thoughts, feelings, and actions of the subjects under study. The researcher faced the possibility of bias in formulating conceptual and operational frameworks. As Schwartz and Schwartz (1969) suggested,

The observer must (1) be motivated to look for his biases; (2) look for them actively and, having come upon a bias, explore its meaning and ramifications; and (3) look upon the uncovering of his biases as a continuous process of discovery--as an ongoing process to which there is no end. (p. 103)

Continuously reflecting on biases is essential when attempting to control subjectivity in both the researcher and the subjects under study.

The researcher's awareness of the possibilities of bias can serve as a valuable tool in understanding past experiences and how to interpret the way people act and

think in the school setting. During the data-collection process, it is important to be able to shift angles of observation and become skilled enough to recognize when it is appropriate to do so. To hear the whole range of views within the community, such a shift provides a balance for what the observer sees, experiences, and feels. Also, it is important not only to look for verification of observations, but also to search for disconfirming evidence in the field setting.

considerable time, the volumes of data must demonstrate the researcher's interpretations. As the data took on many dimensions, the researcher needed to be aware of and reflect on her own subjectivity in the fieldnotes. With a clear conception of the inquiry process, the writer tested, observed, and learned what to discount and what to retain.

The writer's dual role as researcher and teacher helped reduce and control bias in the field. First of all, being a teacher provided the researcher accessibility to many situations and information that would not have been possible for an outsider. Trust in the researcher is necessary in developing a working relationship, openness in communication, and a degree of confidence among teachers, parents, and students. As trust was developed, the informants were assured that all information they provided was confidential. In all interviews, parents and teachers were assured that the researcher role was separate from that

of the teacher role. Staff members shared what they considered to be significant insights into the study of their school. How and why staff and parents shared their thoughts became part of the data used in developing hypotheses on the consolidation of schools. Such information also helped in understanding the adjustments on the part of the receiving and transferred school personnel. In effect, the observer's presence in the dual role of teacher and researcher was recognized in the ethnographic study.

The role of researcher/teacher also had limitations. For example, in performing the duties of teacher, it was not possible to leave the classroom and to observe students in classrooms at different grade levels. Secondly, the researcher/teacher was limited in student interactions, particularly in the small group workshops, because she was perceived as a transferred teacher. Also, the researcher was perceived by resident parents and staff to be part of the transferred community. Because of the transferred/teacher role, it took longer to develop a trust among the resident community. Thirdly, it was important to be sensitive to the need for vigilance in data collection and analysis as well in writing the body of the research report. Most importantly, all assertions needed to be verified repeatedly in the collection of data. Finally, it was important to understand and reflect upon the limitations created in being

been investigated in terms of the political effects on

part of the transfer process and to maintain objectivity in all ecological transitions.

Because the researcher worked and belonged in the school, the presence of an outside participant observer did not disturb the inner workings of the school setting. It was often important, however, for the researcher to maintain her distance and not become overly involved in certain activities or discussions so as to authenticate and preserve impartiality in her observations. In essence, the participant observer had to maintain a delicate balance between dual roles, continuously guarding against bias in the field setting.

Research Questions

In the final year at Evergreen School, the events involved in closing an elementary school, one with a rich historical background, were deemed important in terms of a long-term descriptive, qualitative study. Realizing the relevance of the issues related to adjusting to and coping with a change in schools brought about by declining enrollments, an ethnographic study appeared important for understanding what really occurs when a school closes. What happens to the school community and the adjustments necessitated by the closing process were questions underlying the study of Evergreen School.

Much of what happens when a school is closed has been investigated in terms of the political effects on

school districts (Berger, 1982; Cibulka, 1982; Zerchykow, 1982) and the use of school buildings after a school closure (Sargent & Hardy, 1974; Watchel & Power, 1979; Zerchykow, 1982). In observing the students, parents, and teaching staff at Evergreen, it became increasingly apparent that the ramifications of a school closing extend far beyond what has been reported in research on school closings.

The happenings involving Evergreen school community and the immediate school culture abounded in social interactions of cultural significance within the educational setting. The story of a school community that was losing its elementary school provided many questions relevant to educational research.

The primary research question that initiated the grounded research in this ethnography was:

What adjustments must students, parents, and staff members make when they transfer to a receiving school from an elementary school that has been closed?

Subquestions that guided the fieldwork study were:

1. What do students, parents, and staff members think of their new school? .
2. What adjustments and resistance to change are reflected in student, parent, and staff behaviors?
3. How do transferred students, parents, and staff members adjust socially within the receiving school?
4. Is there a noticeable difference in the observed behaviors and attitudes of transferred and receiving students? Is there a change in the observed behavior and

socialization of transferred students with receiving students during the school year?

5. To what extent do the attitudes of transferred and resident parents affect the students' adjustment to school?
6. Are students affected academically by the change in schools?
7. How does the school principal contribute to student and staff adjustment?
8. How does the receiving community of students, parents, and staff members accept the transferred school community?
9. What factors, both positive and negative, contribute to the consolidation of a new school community?
10. Which of the activities surrounding the closing of the elementary school contribute to a successful adaptation to the receiving community? What factors facilitate or negate a successful adaptation to the receiving school?

These questions directed the inquiry process in generating additional questions and in formulating hypotheses concerning factors affecting the adjustment of students, parents, and staff members at Woodhaven.

Rationale for the Decision to Study Woodhaven

This research on the effects of a school closing on students, parents, and staff was limited to one of four geographical locations in the Evergreen attendance area in which students experienced a transfer. The decision to focus the study in this way was made for several reasons:

1. An in-depth study of only one school that received transferring students and teachers would offer a rich opportunity to study the effects of a school closing.
2. Studying a school receiving a transferred principal would be more informative than investigating one with a resident principal already at the receiving school.
3. The transfer of the closing school's principal, secretary, and four teachers would have affected the ease with which students adjusted to the receiving school.
4. The unanticipated change in the assignment of students to a different receiving school to adjust the district's racial balance caused some negative parental attitudes that needed time to eliminate.
5. Only one of the three schools to which students from the closing school were transferred could be studied effectively in depth.
6. Because Woodhaven was designated late in the school year to be a receiving school, the data collection process did not include participant observations at the consolidated school prior to the closing of Evergreen.
7. Simultaneous data on the effectiveness of the resident principal at Woodhaven were not possible due to late administrative staffing decisions in the Lincoln School District. The role of the previous principal at Woodhaven could not be compared with the transferred principal due to additional administrative changes in Lincoln.

Ethnographic research provides opportunities through interviews and participant observations to record qualitative data in extensive, descriptive detail. Because little research has been conducted on the effects of school closings, the theoretical underpinnings for the research were adopted from theories outside the field of education

and expanded to form a conceptual framework. The inferences and relationships gathered from the data provided a basis for a grounded theory on the adjustment of one group of students, parents, and school personnel who underwent a school transfer due to a school closure.

Methods of Data Collection

The primary method of data collection in this study is the triangulation of many different sources of information. In the triangulation process, multiple sources of data are collected from different perspectives. The basic methodological procedures include participant observation, interviews, the conducting of small-group workshops with key-informant students, collection of school documents, the gathering of a sociometric questionnaire, review of student journals and a teacher journal, and the collection of scores on a standardized achievement test. Each method of data collection is a key element in developing the conceptual framework for the ethnographic research.

Participant Observation

Participant observation is a process in which the observer's presence in a social situation is maintained for the purpose of scientific investigation (McCall, 1961; p.91). In the case of this ethnographic study, observations were conducted from January through June 1983 at Evergreen School and from September 1983 through January 1985 at

Woodhaven Elementary School. Both schools are located in the Lincoln School District.

At Evergreen School, observations were conducted as a pilot study before school, after school, at all Parent Teacher Association functions, and at extra closing-school activities. The primary locations and times for observations of teachers, parents, and students at Woodhaven School were before, during, and after school in classrooms, hallways, the school office, and the teachers' lounge. Staff members were told the purpose of the study during the first week of the 1983-84 school year. (See Appendix D.) Teachers' lunch-time activities were observed in the teachers' lounge, and, when possible, students were observed in the gymnasium, which doubled as a student lunch room. The researcher observed parent involvement at all Parent Teacher Association meetings and at extra school functions. Because of the researcher's teaching assignment, she was able to observe students in a first-grade classroom. In addition, the total student body was observed during assemblies and in after-school activities.

Interviews

Interviews were conducted during the final 1982-83 school year at Evergreen and during the 1983-84 school year at Woodhaven. Principal participants in the interviews were parents, staff members, and students at Woodhaven. Interviews were conducted at Evergreen with a small sample

of parents and staff members (Gorden, 1981). A list of the 82 individuals interviewed is provided in Appendix C.

During the 1983-84 school year, several questions were developed that formed the basis for most interviews with parents, teachers, and key informant students. (See Appendix E. Interview Questions for Teachers, Parents and Student Participants of Small Group Workshops). The original interview questions were followed with many additional opportunities for open-ended discussions as recommended by Spradley (1978). Most of the interview sessions were tape recorded with the permission of the interviewees. Table 2.1 summarizes the interviews conducted with transferred and resident parents, key informant students, teachers, principal, and secretary at Woodhaven (McCall & Simons, 1969). Additional interviews were conducted with parents of former Evergreen students attending other receiving elementary schools, principals of schools receiving former Evergreen students, and selected central school administrators.

Table 2.1

Table of Interviews

Group Interviewed	Number Interviewed
A. Evergreen School: 1982-83 School Year	
1. Evergreen staff members	8
2. Evergreen parents	9
3. Follow-up interviews (with staff members)	2
B. Woodhaven School: 1983-84 School Year	
1. Transferred parents at Woodhaven	10
2. Resident Woodhaven parents	8
3. Parents from the Evergreen area transferred to other receiving schools	7
4. Transferred staff at Woodhaven	5
5. Resident Woodhaven Staff	5
6. Other school district staff:	
Principals	2
Central Administrators	2
Helping teacher	1
7. Transferred students at Woodhaven	18
8. Resident Woodhaven students	15
9. Follow-up interviews with parents	2
10. Follow-up interviews with staff members	6
Total Number of Interviews	96

Small-Group Student Workshops

During the 1983-84 school year, two small group workshops were conducted with transferred students from the Evergreen area. The workshops were held to provide opportunities for observing the adjustments of "key student informants" who had transferred to Woodhaven. Nineteen students served as key informants. In ethnographic research, key informants are insiders in the field whom the researcher observes and questions to obtain emic data. Spindler (1982) discussed Hymes's definition of the emic perspective as "the view from within the culture, the folk view, in terms of native categories" (p. 7).

The students, all informed and cooperating key informants, participated in a language arts workshop held bimonthly during the school's lunch period. The transferred students were recommended by their teachers as interested in being involved. The students had their parents' permission to participate in the small-group workshops (See Appendix F: Consent Letter to "Key Informant" Parents). The transferred students in the workshops, who were described by their teachers as verbal children, participated in an ongoing series of small-group discussion sessions. The groups of students were grouped by age, the first and second graders meeting together and the fourth and fifth graders meeting together. The fourth and fifth graders also read to younger

students and occasionally wrote in individual journals (Almy, 1974; Graves, 1982; Jackson, 1968; Sitton, 1980).

The workshops were scheduled intermittently during the 1983-84 school year, the older group meeting 15 times and the younger group 10 times. As Table 2.2 indicates, the older group included four fifth graders (two boys and two girls) and six fourth graders (four girls and two boys). Only one fifth-grade girl was a minority student. The younger group included five first graders (two girls and three boys) and five second graders (three girls and two boys). One second-grade girl was a minority student. The percentage of minority students, although small, corresponded to the small percentage of minority students transferred to Woodhaven from the former Evergreen area.

At the beginning of the second semester, a second group of students was chosen to participate in the small group workshops, as indicated in Table 2.3. Each of the transferred students picked a friend from among the resident students to join them in the small group workshops. The combined groups of resident and transferred students met for several sessions in January and February in the first year of the school merger.

Table 2.2

Small-Group Workshops: Transferred Student Composition

Grade	Total	Boys	Girls	Minority
First	5	3	2	0
Second	4	1	3	1
Fourth	6	2	4	0
Fifth	4	2	2	1

Table 2.3

Small-Group Workshops: Resident Student Composition

Grade	Total	Boys	Girls	Minority
First	5	3	2	2
Second	4	2	2	4
Fourth	4a	0	2	2
Fifth	4	2	2	3

a Because the workshops were held during the lunch-period outdoor free time and the boys wanted to go out to play, two fourth-grade boys did not pick a resident friend to join the workshops.

Because of the increased sizes of the combined groups of transferred and resident students, the children met according to grade level, rather than by lower-and upper-grade groups. The combined groups participated in several small-group discussion sessions in which the students informally related the development of their friendships with each other during the school year. After spring vacation, the workshops disbanded until the final weeks of school. During the last week in May 1984, the students participated in individual interviews to conclude the school year activities. The transferred students were also involved in a final field trip to a local fast food restaurant as a token of the resercher's appreciation for participating in the small-groups throughout the school year. (See Appendix F: Consent Letter to Key Informants and Parents.)

School Documents

All support data related to Woodhaven were gathered during the 1983-84 school year and the first semester of the 1984-85 school year. School documents that provided support data were newsletters and memos from the principal and the Parent Teacher Association. Other school-related data were gathered from pertinent articles on closing schools from the local newspaper and documents from the central school district. Documents collected during the 1982-83 school year at Evergreen were also used to compare methods of

communicating with the parents, school community, and school personnel.

Sociometric Questionnaire

During the 1983-84 school year, students in grades one through five were given a sociometric questionnaire containing five statements (Bennett, 1981). Each individual classroom teacher administered the sociometric questionnaire according to the directions specified by the researcher (See Appendix G: Sociometric Questionnaire for Grades One Through Five). Students in each classroom were asked to rate the other class members individually. Each student was given a list containing the names of all the students in the classroom. All students in the class were rated by each other as follows: Best friends were given a 1; good friends, a 2; okay friends, a 3; kids they didn't know well, a 4; and kids they didn't know at all, a 5. A score of 1 was considered a positive rating and a 5, a negative rating, with ratings of 2 through 4 falling in between.

Teachers were asked to administer the sociometric questionnaire in late September 1983 and May 1984. Following administration, the numerical score each child received was tabulated and cross-referenced by the names of the students. The distributions of the raw scores on the three questionnaires were listed in rank order for transferred and resident students in each classroom. (See Appendix H: Sample

Ranking for One Classroom of Transferred Students on Sociometric Questions.)

Journals

Information from teacher and student journals was gathered during the 1982-83 and 1983-84 school years. In the final year at Evergreen, one teacher kept a journal during the final months before the school closed in a method described by Yinger and Clark (1981). In addition, two classrooms of students at Woodhaven wrote in journals during the first year of school consolidation. Students in the small-group workshops also kept journals to some extent on their own.

In elementary school, writing in journals is one method by which students can come to terms with their feelings toward each other and toward school. Canfield and Wells (1976) stressed the use of journals and their effectiveness stating:

Keeping a journal has several advantages. It allows the student to keep an ongoing account of how he is growing, of what is happening to him, of how he uniquely responds to a given situation. It provides a cumulative statement of who he is, how he sees himself, and how others see him. (p. 21)

Students in two classrooms, a first grade and a fourth grade, maintained journals during the 1983-84 school year (See Appendix F: Consent Letter to Parents of Students Writing in Classroom Journals). The organization of the student journals varied according to each classroom. Twenty

four students in the fourth grade were given specific topics for each writing session (See Appendix H: Topics for Fourth Grade Journals). Because the fourth-grade classes participated in a team-teaching situation and switched between classes, not all students wrote on all of the suggested topics. Also, some students were absent or attending special classes during various writing sessions.

Twenty-four first graders maintained journals in which they wrote stories dictated to parent volunteers or to upper-grade students acting as tutors. In the second semester, many first-graders wrote and illustrated entries independently. Some topics for dictated stories were suggested; others were the students' own ideas. The first graders also created original stories for their writing folders following a procedure suggested by Graves (1982). A final writing activity was writing dictated stories about friendship and school closings (See Appendix H: Topics for Student Journals and Discussions in Student Interviews.)

Academic Achievement

Data were gathered on the transferred students to ascertain their academic growth. Scaled scores on the Stanford Achievement Test for the transferred students were gathered for the 1983 school year at Evergreen and the 1984 school year at Woodhaven. Scaled scores on the Stanford Achievement Test were also gathered on the resident Woodhaven students for the 1983-84 school year. These scores

were analyzed by means of a paired t-test to determine if there had been any changes in the students' academic achievement from one year to the next. A t-test to was employed determine if any differences in academic achievement existed between the transferred and resident students.

Geneology: The Involved Schools and the
Population of the Study

The temporal events in the school closing and consolidation process are presented in Appendix A: Chronology. In addition, to help the reader understand the relationships between participants involved in the closing of Evergreen School and the transfer to Woodhaven, a geneology of the Evergreen staff and students and the Woodhaven staff and student population is presented. In Figure 2.1, the dissemination of the Evergreen staff members to their prospective new schools is shown, along with the projected placement of the Evergreen students for the following school year. Figure 2.2 shows the geneology of the staff and students who were transferred to Woodhaven in the 1983-84 school year, along with the resident staff and student population at Woodhaven.

This ethnographic study of student, parent, and staff adjustments to a new school following a school closing involved many schools, students, parents, and staff members. For the reader to assimilate the many participants in the

closing of Evergreen and the consolidation of Woodhaven, a list of participants mentioned in the dissertation is presented in Figures 2.3 and 2.4. Referring to these figures while reading the report will help the reader avoid confusing the names of participants and schools mentioned throughout the study. It should be noted that the names of all students, parents, staff members, and schools have been changed to protect the anonymity of the participants.

.

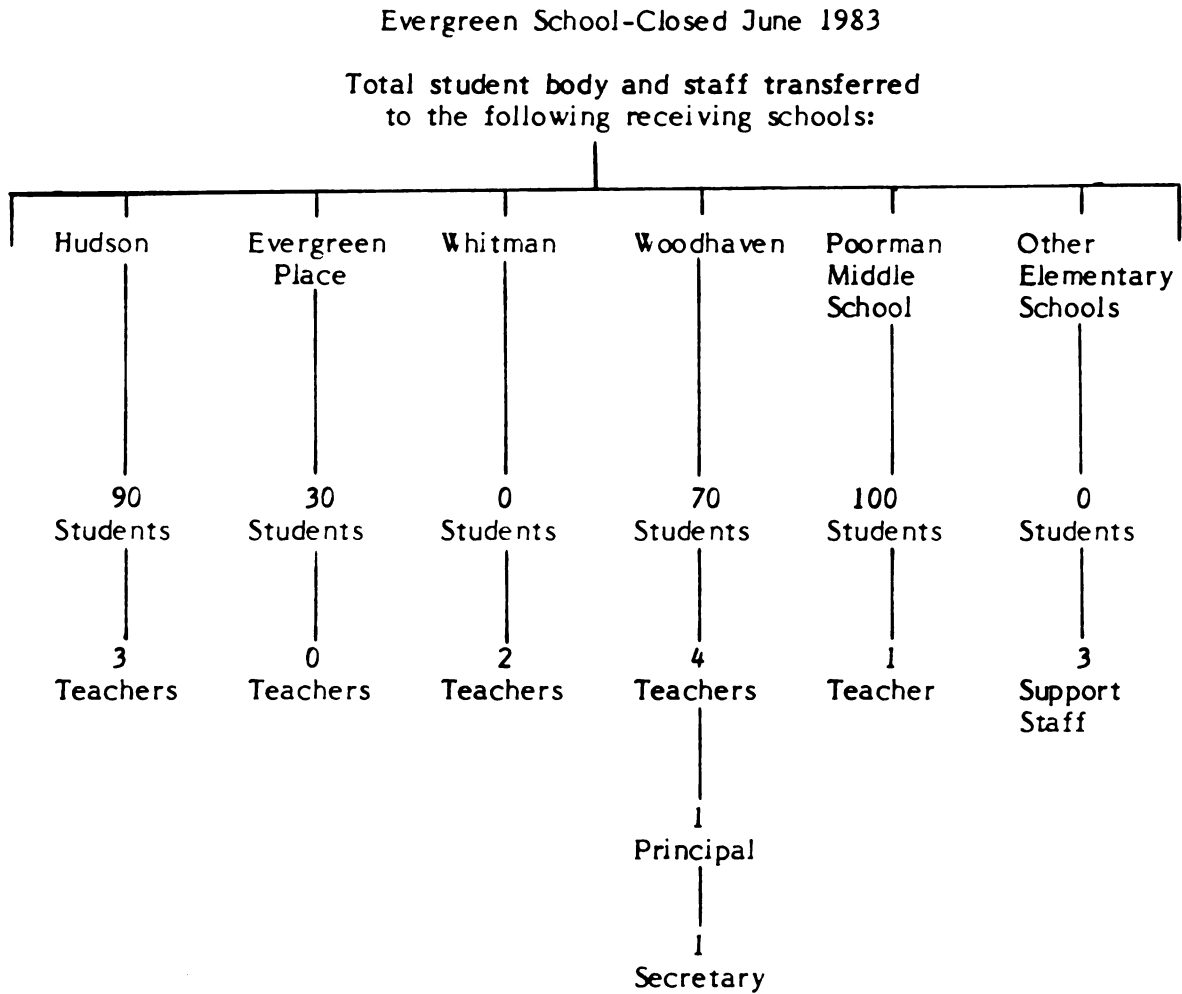


Figure 2.1

Dissemination of Evergreen staff and students

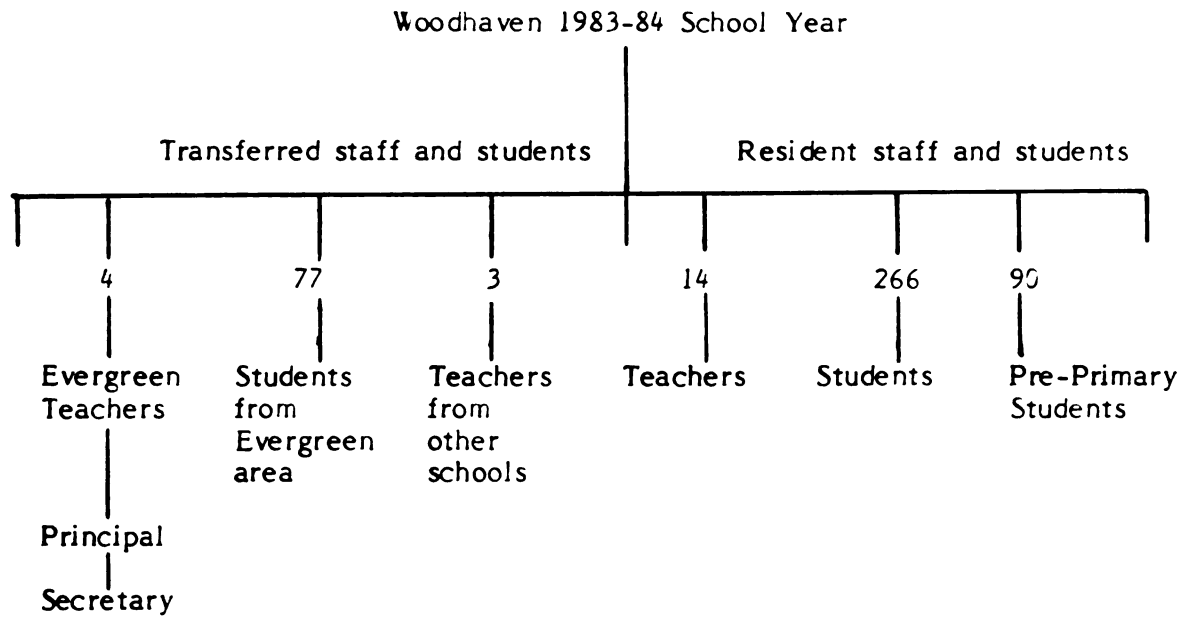


Figure 2.2

Woodhaven staff and student population involved in the study

List of Participants

A. Evergreen School: 1982-83 School Year

Staff Members

1. Mrs. Michelle Franks
2. Mrs. Pam Scott
3. Mrs. Margaret Wright
4. Mrs. Lisa Jackson
5. Mr. Tom Harrison
6. Mrs. Judy Jacks
7. Mrs. Vanessa Hilton
8. Mr. Sam Williams
9. Mrs. Dorothy Hellman
10. Mrs. Jennifer White
11. Mr. Simon Nelson

B. Evergreen School: 1982-83 School Year

Parents

1. Mrs. Damon
2. Mrs. Gilbert
3. Mrs. Edison
4. Mr. Roberts
5. Mr. Henrys
6. Mrs. Roberts

C. Evergreen School: 1982-83 School Year

Administrators

1. Mr. Dennis Adams-Principal, Evergreen
2. Mrs. Grant-Pupil Personnel Director
3. Mr. Howe-Principal, Evergreen Place
4. Mr. Brown-Principal, Hudson
5. Dr. Holt-Central Administrator

Figure 2.3

List of participants mentioned in 1983 study of Evergreen

List of Participants

A. Woodhaven School: 1983-84 School Year

Woodhaven Staff Members

Transferred
Staff Members

1. Mr. Dennis Adams
2. Mrs. Michelle Franks
3. Mrs. Lisa Jackson
4. Mrs. Judy Jacks
5. Mrs. Pam Scott
6. Mr. Tom Harrison

Resident
Staff Members

1. Mr. Matt Daniels
2. Mrs. Willa Mae Champman
3. Mrs. Laura Bolt
4. Mrs. Linda Wood
5. Miss Ann Burns
6. Mrs. Joyce Barnes
7. Mrs. Karen Turner
8. Mrs. Sherry Woods
9. Mrs. Terry Turner

B. Woodhaven School: 1983-84 School Year

Administrators

1. Mr. Dennis Adams-Principal, Woodhaven
2. Mr. Howe-Principal, Evergreen Place
3. Mr. Brown-Principal Hudson
4. Dr. Holt-Central Administrator

Figure 2.4

List of participants mentioned in 1983-84
study of Woodhaven

List of Participants

C. Woodhaven School: 1983-84 School Year

Parents of Transferred and Resident Students

Parents of Transferred Evergreen Students Attending Woodhaven	Parents of Transferred Evergreen Students Attending Other Receiving Schools	Resident Parents of Woodhaven Students
1. Mrs. King	1. Mrs. Fox	1. Mrs. Fuller
2. Mrs. Gilbert	2. Mrs. Page	2. Mr. Seller
3. Mrs. King	3. Mrs. Carter	3. Ms. Powers
4. Mrs. Miller	4. Mrs. Fisher	4. Mrs. Washington
5. Mrs. Hinton	5. Mrs. Roberts	5. Mrs. Cain
6. Mrs. Robinson	6. Mrs. Kent	6. Mrs. Knox
7. Mrs. Foster	7. Mr. Kent	7. Mr. Drake
8. Mrs. Russell		
9. Mrs. Jones		
10. Mrs. Mann		
11. Mrs. Klein		

D. Woodhaven School: 1983-84 School Year

Transferred and Resident Woodhaven Students in Small Group Workshops

Transferred Fourth and Fifth Graders	Transferred First and Second Graders	Resident Fourth and Fifth Graders	Resident First and Second Graders
1. Janet	1. Sue	1. Nancy	1. Anne
2. Jill	2. Brent	2. Isabel	2. Bob
3. Sarah	3. Janice	3. Ling	3. Suzanne
4. Paul	4. Jimmy	4. Joy	4. Frank
5. Ryan	5. Ron	5. Randy	5. Chad
6. Suzie	6. Marie	6. Joseph	6. Bruce
7. Gerry	7. Jon	7. Mary	7. Neal
8. Gail	8. Helen	8. Donna	8. Wanda
9. Matt	9. Vicky		9. Debra
10. Lyn	10. Garry		

Figure 2.4 (Cont'd)

Format of the Ethnographic Report

A description of the events surrounding the closing of Evergreen School provides important background information of the community transferred to a new school and the events that led to the closing of an elementary school. This background information forms the basis for Chapter III, A School Closing: Evergreen School.

In Chapter III, as well as in succeeding chapters, key linkages are developed and are often presented through detailed descriptions of observed events called vignettes. In ethnographic studies, vignettes are an important element in making the strange familiar. Vignettes provide vivid, and detailed descriptions of events that help validate the assertions developed from the data-collection process (Erickson, 1979).

The setting of the school to which the study participants were transferred is described in Chapter IV, The Consolidated School: Woodhaven Elementary School. This section makes the unknown, in terms of the school members, the community, and the activities of an elementary school, familiar to the reader.

Chapters V, VI, and VII describe the adjustments of members of the transferred and resident school communities; students, parents, and staff members respectively. It should be noted that there was considerable overlapping in the collection of data in the field situation. For the students,

parents, and staff members, the key linkages in the research findings often overlapped, with multiple or similar key linkages among the three groups under study. To provide for a clear and concise description of the research participants, however, the three groups are discussed separately with occasional cross-validations described in the vignettes. Finally, Chapter VIII contains a summary of the study, conclusions, implications, and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER III

A SCHOOL CLOSING: EVERGREEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Evergreen School, A Rich Historical Background

Evergreen School, a school in a racially integrated neighborhood, was situated on a busy intersection in the south end of Lincoln. In June 1983, the year Evergreen was scheduled to close, it had a student population of 290 children in ten classrooms. Children in kindergarten through sixth grade walked to school from apartments, townhouses, a small trailer court, small one-family homes, and a planned subdivision of middle-to upper middle-income homes. The neighborhood included professionals and blue-collar workers, as well as some unemployed individuals. Some families were headed by single parents. Although the school district was under a federal order to guarantee racial integration, the Evergreen area's housing patterns provided a naturally integrated neighborhood school of white and black students, thus escaping any court-ordered busing of students to and from the area.

Evergreen's history spanned more than 140 years; it began as a one-room schoolhouse built in 1837. Children from surrounding farms attended Evergreen, and the school grew into a small community center located on the edge of the

"big city." The first schoolhouse burned down and was replaced by another single-room schoolhouse. The second school also burned and was replaced by a brick structure in 1929. This two-story structure remained a part of the present Evergreen School. Additions were made to the building in 1949 and 1953. In 1955 another school, Evergreen Place was constructed. These two schools made the Evergreen area a viable rural school district until it consolidated with the city in 1958.

From 1955 until the 1970s, the population of the area expanded, and became racially integrated, so white and black children lived and went to school together. The school population grew until 1975. During Evergreen's final ten years, however, the student population gradually declined, as indicated in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1

Declining Enrollments at Evergreen School

School Year	Total Enrollment
1974-75	409
1975-76	400
1976-77	387
1977-78	349a
1978-79	340
1979-80	340
1980-81	333
1981-82	293b
1982-83	289

a Drop of 38 children

b Drop of 40 children, the year Evergreen's closing was announced

From 1974 through 1983, Evergreen's student population constantly declined; there was an increasing trend toward transitory pupil attendance, especially in the primary grades (Lincoln Demographic Data, 1983). During the same period, however, the teaching staff remained stable as indicated in Table 3.2.

As shown in Table 3.2, 8 out of 11 teachers had taught at Evergreen for ten or more years. Principals, on the other hand, had a short tenure at Evergreen; there had been five principals during a ten-year period, as indicated in Table 3.3. The effect of long-term tenure among the teaching staff and short-term tenure of administrators was observed in the self-sufficiency of the Evergreen teachers.

Table 3.2

Tenure of teachers at Evergreen

Grade Taught	Years at Evergreen	Total Years Teaching
Kindergarten	11	11
First	2a	16
Second	10	25
Second/third	12	20
Third	10	25
Fourth	10	15
Fourth Fifth	15	15
Fifth	17	23
Sixth	2a	10
Sixth	15	16
Resource teacher	2	6

a Two teachers replaced retiring teachers of long tenure at Evergreen in 1981.

Table 3.3

Tenure of principals at Evergreen

Year	Principal	Years at Evergreen
1966	Principal A	1
1967	Principal B	5
1972	Principal C	4
1976	Principal D	1/2
1976	Principal E	1 1/2
1978	Principal F	3
1981	Principal G	2

School Boundary Changes

The school district's administrative policy determines final boundary plans for closing schools in February of the year a school is scheduled to close (See Appendix B). As the result of conferences with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and officials from the Lincoln School District, boundaries for the transferring Evergreen community were changed to serve the district's total commitment to racial balance as ordered by the federal courts. As a result of joint administrative meetings, two geographical locations within the Evergreen area designated tentatively to be within walking distance of the nearest neighborhood schools, were reassigned to different nearby elementary schools. One school, Hudson, which was already receiving a group of transferring Evergreen students, was designated to receive an additional group of Evergreen children. This group of students, because of the walking distance, were to be bused. The second group of children, instead of being assigned to Riverside, a neighborhood school within walking distance, was reassigned to Woodhaven, a school that was farther away but was still considered within walking distance.

The proposal was announced in the city newspaper but gave no specific information about exact changes in school boundaries. The following week, the Evergreen's principal announced the proposed boundary changes. Plans were also

announced for a public hearing held at the school. The school district, following recommendations of many authorities on declining enrollments and school closings (Abramowitz & Rosenfeld, 1978; Allopenna, 1977; Bishop, 1979; Brodinsky, 1981; Burns, 1978; Fowler, 1980; Gotti, 1981; Kaye, 1978; McGlothlin, 1981; Spathelf, 1978; Wholeben, 1980; Zerchykow, 1982), conducted hearings in all schools affected by the boundary changes, including those that were scheduled to close during the following two years. Table 3.4 shows the changes in boundaries for the four geographical locations within the Evergreen area.

Table 3.4

Reassignment of Elementary School Attendance Areas to
Maintain Racial Balance

Evergreen Attendance	Initial Plan: School to which students will be transferred	Final Plan: School to which students were transferred	Busing Needed
Area 1- Predominantly single-family homes	Hudson	Hudson	No
Area 2- Predominantly apartments, townhouses	Evergreen Place	Hudson	Yes
Area 3- Apartments/ single-family homes	Evergreen Place	Evergreen Place	No
Area 4- Single-family homes/ apartments	Riverside	Woodhaven	No a

a Students in Area 4 eventually were bused for safety reasons.

The First Hearing

The first hearing on the proposed boundary changes was held on Wednesday, March 3, 1983, at 7:00 p.m. in the Evergreen gymnasium. Chairs were set up facing a speaker's podium, with an overhead projector and screen in the background. At the gymnasium entrance was a table containing information on the procedures the school board had followed in determining boundaries and a map of the area designating proposed boundaries for the following school year. The hearing drew a modest crowd of 40 parents and children, 5 administrators, and 2 Evergreen teachers. Most of the parents, who were also white, were from the area reassigned from Riverside to Woodhaven School (see Table 3.4).

Before the meeting began, parents were clustered around the map talking with the guest speaker, Mrs. Grant. At 7:00 p.m., Mrs. Grant, an administrator from the central school district office, was introduced by Mr. Adams, Evergreen's principal. The audience was described by one teacher, who was sitting in the back of the gymnasium, as "hot and ready to attack at a moment's notice."

Mrs. Grant began the hearing by describing how the boundary changes would affect each attendance area. She explained that the proposed boundary changes had been designed to bring a racial balance to all elementary schools. She described specific boundary changes and then,

at 7:20 p.m., opened the hearing to the audience for a question-and-answer session.

Initially, parents reassigned to the Woodhaven area had anticipated that their children would be walking to Riverside. This idea was first proposed to parents during an informational Parent Teacher Association meeting held early in November. At the fall meeting, a school district administrator described tentative plans for student transfers to Riverside School, a somewhat farther walk for the students, but not as far away as Woodhaven. At the first hearing, however, when the parents discovered that their children would have to cross Ridgewood Road, a busy four-lane street to reach Woodhaven School, they were anxious and apprehensive. Because the children could have walked to Riverside, which was closer, without crossing a busy road, safety was of paramount concern.

During the first hearing, many parents voiced their worries about the danger of their children crossing Ridgewood Road. Mrs. Gilbert spoke for many parents when she commented that, to her, the change was "just not logical." During the barrage of questions from parents regarding the children's safety, Mrs. Grant, who was a low ranking administrator in the school district, gradually lost credibility with the audience. The parents were not willing to accept her statement, "This is just a proposal. Nothing is definite until the school board adopts it late in April

or May." At the end of the hearing, she stressed that parents should submit their unanswered questions in writing for the school board's consideration in their final determination of proposed changes in elementary school boundaries. Parents' frustrations were expressed by one father, who stated during the hearing:

We are in limbo. Our children are in limbo. We are in a dilemma which started over two years ago. We are so confused. Why can't you just say where we are going?

The question-and-answer session then drifted away from the topic of boundaries to the question, "Why are they closing Evergreen?" In circumventing this issue, which the school board had decided two years before, Mrs. Grant stated, "That is not an issue which I can address." Another mother then remarked, "It's nice to know our alternatives." Mrs. Grant, who indicated repeatedly that she was only a spokesperson for the school district and not a decision maker, replied, "We didn't come with alternatives to this meeting." A father then asked, "What can we do to change your mind?" With no definitive answer to this question, Mrs. Grant concluded the meeting by reviewing the schedule of events for implementing the boundary issue.

Mr. Adams, the principal, wrote the address of the Lincoln School District on an overhead projector so that parents could write to the school board concerning questions they felt were still unanswered. As the hearing drew to a close, another parent asked, "Will any of the teachers go

with our kids? I have heard that the teachers already have put in their assignment requests and Woodhaven wasn't a consideration at the time. We don't know a thing about Woodhaven." In response to parental concerns about the quality of instruction at Woodhaven, another administrator in the audience offered to meet with the parents and give them a guided tour of the new school.

Still not satisfied, Mrs. Gilbert spoke up from the back of the room: "When is the next school board meeting? Maybe we should go and sit in on it." As the meeting was breaking up, Mrs. Gilbert obtained the names of seven or eight parents who would write a joint letter to the school board and attend its next meeting. While parents talked informally with each other after the meeting, the Evergreen principal was observed walking quietly around the room and talking with many parents--those who were upset and others who were just interested in how the proposed boundary changes might affect them.

Because many parents reassigned to the Woodhaven attendance area were not satisfied with the answers they received during the first hearing, Mrs. Gilbert's suggestion of going to the next school board meeting did, in fact, materialize. Several parents documented their concerns for the safety of their children in a letter that Mrs. Gilbert and another parent presented to the school board. The letter produced results; the school board promised another hearing

at Evergreen to try to answer parents' questions and concerns. Also, before the second hearing the city traffic commission conducted a safety check on the four-lane road in question.

Between the two public hearings at Evergreen, a Parent Teacher Association executive board meeting was scheduled; several concerned parents from the prospective Woodhaven area attended that meeting. Mr. Adams, the principal of Evergreen, was observed to follow detailed notes in his presentation to parents. The Evergreen teacher vice-president who attended all the board meetings reported that Mr. Adams planned in detail the agenda for this and every Parent Teacher Association executive board meeting. After the meeting, Mrs. Gilbert and other parents said that they had a better understanding of the school board's actions.

The exosystem at Evergreen was a source of frustration to many parents, those on the Parent Teacher Association executive board as well as other interested parents. It was observed repeatedly that the unanticipated ecological transition confronting the parents was eased with the help of the principal at Evergreen. The principal's carefully planned actions at meetings with parents was noted by the researcher to help some of the community most affected by the change in school boundaries to become more

receptive to Woodhaven, the school their children would soon attend.

The Second Hearing

The safety of the children walking more than a mile to school and crossing a busy road remained the parents' primary concern. A month after the initial hearing on proposed boundary changes, a second hearing was held in the Evergreen gymnasium. As promised, a school board member was present to answer parents' questions and concerns. The meeting began exactly at 7:00 p.m.; Mr. Adams introduced Dr. Holt, the central administrator in charge of school boundaries. Dr. Holt announced the results of the safety check, reviewed the city's recommendations and, on the traffic commission's recommendation, promised busing for the students in the Woodhaven area.

Although more than 40 parents attended the first meeting, only 20 parents attended the second meeting, which lasted just ten minutes. At 7:12 p.m., Dr. Holt asked if there were any further questions, and on hearing none, dismissed the meeting. The prospective Woodhaven parents attending the meeting appeared satisfied that their children would be provided bus transportation to the new school. While the meeting was breaking up, one parent commented to Dr. Holt, "One thing that would help us a lot is to have Mr. Adams go to Woodhaven as the principal. That would really help us." This request was granted at the end of the school

year, when it was announced Mr. Adams would be the new principal of Woodhaven.

Although the parental request was not the only reason Mr. Adams was assigned to the administrative post at Woodhaven, that appointment did provide the community with a definite sense of satisfaction. Initially, parents did not think their request that Evergreen teachers also be transferred to Woodhaven would be met because the teachers had already submitted their requests for future placements. As a result of final administrative staffing decisions, however, three classroom teachers, a special education resource teacher, and the school secretary were transferred to Woodhaven along with the principal. Thus, the new Woodhaven parents' fears that no Evergreen staff members would follow their children were not realized. In fact, in the final analysis, more faculty members followed the Evergreen students to Woodhaven than to the other transfer schools.

A Final School Activity:
"Link to the Past" Vignette

To acknowledge Evergreen's rich heritage, the principal staged a finale to bring a satisfactory sense of school closure to the community of students, parents, and staff members. During the last months of school, students and staff personnel planned a school program based on Evergreen School's history. The Parent Teacher Association

historian, Mrs. Damon, researched the history of Evergreen in Parent Teacher Association scrapbooks, books, and newspaper articles; she also interviewed former Evergreen personnel. Mrs. Damon wrote and rewrote the script for the program so that the school's history could be expressed musically and artistically by all of the kindergarten through sixth grade students.

Mr. Adams called on additional school district personnel to assist in planning the program. The school district music specialist helped plan the music, and a high school theater teacher organized the school's lighting system above the stage. The district's media center, with an ex-Evergreen principal serving as the director, videotaped the second of two performances. Most important, the classroom teachers organized student songs, dances, and art work. The entire Evergreen student body spent several weeks practicing their songs and dances; older students helped prepare art work and backdrops for the program.

Students learned about the school's history through individual classroom programs presented by Mrs. Damon who showed slides of the school from previous years. In addition, each classroom visited a preserved one-room schoolhouse across town to help the students develop a feeling for their school's history.

The program, "A Link to the Past," was presented on two consecutive nights. To add to the authenticity of the

historical setting depicted in the presentation, many parents helped their children dress in costumes appropriate to the historical period being depicted. In one scene, the first graders sang an alphabet song in a log schoolhouse, the first Evergreen School. On the night of the performance, many girls came dressed in long skirts and bonnets, and several boys wore short pants and suspenders. The boys, who were not used to short pants, entered the classroom sheepishly, but with smiling faces. The frequent snap of suspenders could be heard in the hallways as the boys and girls were waiting to perform. Cameras flashed as teachers and parents took pictures of the students dressed in their costumes for the last Evergreen School program.

During both performances, the audience was filled with parents and many former Evergreen students, teachers, and principals. Many former students and teachers who had come to bid farewell to their school were in their sixties and seventies. Following the program, Mr. Adams voiced his appreciation to all former students, teachers, and principals who attended the pageant. For the final song, "Make New Friends," all students and teachers donned red and white T-shirts depicting a one-room schoolhouse and the words "Evergreen School." The T-shirts were the result of several fund raising projects and had been purchased for the students as a remembrance of the school. Extra shirts were given to former principals and others actively involved at

Evergreen; the shirts were so popular that many adults who had attended Evergreen wanted them. In fact, the principal later reported that many people were disappointed when they learned it was impossible to get an Evergreen T-shirt. The students frequently wore their commemorative T-shirts afterwards.

The school pageant provided a culminating experience that increased the students' identification with Evergreen School. Staff members, parents, and students, physically exhausted by the performances and weeks of preparation, displayed pride in the entire extravaganza as they watched themselves on cable television the following week. The school community also appeared to be very impressed by the undertaking. A local television station covered the event; accounts were reported in newspaper articles; the videotape of the program was shown again in classes; comments and letters from central school administrators, parents, teachers, and students voiced approval. In the final analysis, the principal and staff's attempt to close the school "in style" was successful.

The school community's need to identify, to have a sense of belonging, was fulfilled during the final school program, which accentuated Evergreen's heritage without developing a feeling of regret about its closing. The aim of the program was to provide a respectful end to an era. The students perceived the program as a fun-filled, exciting

event. Adults, parents and former Evergreen members, many of whom viewed the program nostalgically, appeared pleased with the youthful enthusiasm displayed in the presentation. However, the sense of belonging to Evergreen that was heightened in the spring had to pass as the school staff prepared the students for the next step in the school closing--visitations to each receiving elementary school.

Visitations to the New Schools

In an attempt to ease the students' adjustment to closing Evergreen, Mr. Adams, with the support of central administrators, planned visitations to the receiving elementary schools. This activity, which has been suggested by educators writing on school closings (Bussard, 1981; Thomas, 1980; and Zerchykow, 1982) helped prepare Evergreen students for their transfer to a new school. The visitations began with the fifth and sixth graders, who were scheduled to attend middle school the following year. Next, kindergarteners through fourth graders who were scheduled for placement in three different elementary schools, visited their respective schools.

The first visit was to Woodhaven. The 70 students going to Woodhaven were those who initially had anticipated going to Riverside School. The students, with the principal of Evergreen, four teachers, and four parents, rode to Woodhaven on a school bus. The receiving principal talked to the students for about ten minutes giving them an overview

of the school. He then had fifth and sixth graders show the visitors around the building. Half an hour later, at the end of the tour, the students, parents, and teachers returned to the hallway. The students asked a few questions and then boarded the school bus for the return trip to Evergreen.

The second visit was to Hudson. Hudson's principal talked to the 90 students, 4 teachers, and 6 parents in the gymnasium. He then walked the entire group around the school, noting various features of the building. Students at the front of the group could hear, but those at the back heard very few of the principal's comments. At the end of the tour, after answering a few questions, the principal sent the students back to Evergreen with an informational note about Hudson for their parents.

The last group of students to visit their new school for the following year were 30 children attending Evergreen Place. Upon arriving at Evergreen Place, there was a slight delay because the receiving principal, Mr. Howe, had forgotten about their visit. However, he did not appear upset about the sudden appearance of a group of 30 students, 3 teachers, and the principal of Evergreen.

Mr. Howe began a tour of the building, starting with the kindergarten and proceeding to the media center and reading room. Next to this area, at an open outdoor court, the principal stopped to describe the plan to plant a dogwood tree in honor of a student who had died recently

after a long illness. While Mr. Howe spoke, he tried to instill in the children a sense of pride in good behavior and in working hard to do one's best in school. He concluded by saying, "Remember Scott and what he meant to our school. Next fall make sure you see the dogwood tree and the changing of leaves on the tree."

Each student was invited into a classroom at his/her grade level for the following year. After the group toured the playground, they were invited to sit on the floor in front of the school office. At that time, Mr. Howe talked to the students about Evergreen Place, his expectations, and those of the teachers. He concluded by commenting on safety, school policy, and routines. He then entertained questions. When the bus arrived, each child and teacher was given a drink of juice to take back to Evergreen. As the principal handed the children their drinks, he said he looked forward to seeing them again in the fall.

Two teachers visited all three schools with the students and remarked at the differences in the three visits. One teacher noted that the comments of the students going to Woodhaven occasionally reflected the dissatisfaction of their parents but that these feelings were tempered by the friendliness of the student guides. The students going to Hudson, who were massed in one large group, did not relate any negative comments; neither, did

they express much enthusiasm about or interest in their new school.

Mr. Howe's presentation at Evergreen Place was spontaneous, but it was observed to elicit positive attitudes and enthusiasm about attending Evergreen Place. Overall, the students going to Evergreen Place were impressed and excited about attending the new school. Jeff, a third grader, evidenced the students' enthusiasm as he skipped along the hall to his classroom at Evergreen after visiting Evergreen Place. He yelled to a passing student, "I'm a Panther now," with a smile on his face and his arms raised in excitement.

The visits took place in May, after the school program and other extra school trips. The students and parents had prepared for Evergreen's closing for more than two years. Throughout the year, students at Evergreen had experienced many activities and programs planned by the principal and the teachers. Those activities had instilled in the students a sense of pride in the school, a positive feeling about closing Evergreen, and a sense of anticipation about moving to a new school.

Staff Members' Resistance to Change

During the final school year, resistance to change caused Evergreen teachers some stress. The teachers were aware of their own feelings, those of parents, and, to some extent, those of students as they resisted the processes of

change. Staff members who had worked closely together throughout the year to help prepare students for the school closure were themselves victims because their efforts had reinforced their closely knit, cohesive group organization. Because of the closeness that developed among the staff members, the actual school closing was most difficult for them.

During the final year at Evergreen, teachers committed themselves to an intense involvement with the students. For example, they planned many extra-curricular activities with the students for the "last time at Evergreen." The teachers' roots, so to speak, were entrenched at Evergreen due to the extra activities and to their many years of service to the school community; at least seven teachers had taught at Evergreen more than ten years.

The principal commented in an interview that the main problem associated with the school closing was the "task of staff relocation." Although the teachers had the same two-year period in which to adjust to the school closure as did parents and students, their future placement was tentative and was not announced until a few months before the school actually closed. In the end, most teachers followed the students to the receiving schools, but problems in placement had evolved several times during the year. In fact, the summer after the school closure, two teachers and

the school secretary were relocated to Woodhaven; this had not been proposed as a possibility the previous spring during the closing events.

Resistance to changing schools was observed in the informal events the teachers planned during the last year at Evergreen. Throughout the year, the following comment was frequently heard: "Since it's our last year together!" In some cases morning coffees for the teachers became elaborate breakfasts, and celebrations of staff members birthdays became more and more extravagant as the year drew to a close.

Achieving parent and student satisfaction with the activities at Evergreen was one goal of the principal and teachers during the final year at the school. The teachers' active involvement with the students helped achieve a satisfactory adjustment on the part of the community members; nevertheless, the teachers' final attitudes toward Evergreen's closing were nostalgic and stressful.

The Adjustment Period

It is important to consider the period of time involved in the closing of Evergreen School. Evergreen's position in the school district's closing schedule allowed a two-year adjustment period before final closure (see Appendix A: Chronology). This time factor was not planned by the school district, but was the result of readjustments in the districtwide school-closing schedule. It was simply one

element in the master plan for adjusting to declining enrollments and establishing sound fiscal responsibility.

During Evergreen School's final two years, parents came to accept the school closing. Although some parents resisted the closure of Evergreen because the outcome was unknown, for the most part the two-year period appeared to help the community accept the school closing.

Although parents and staff members viewed the two-year period as a positive element, some administrators did not see it that way. Dr. Holt, the administrator in charge of school demographics for the district, indicated in an interview that two years was too long before the closing of a school. He commented:

There's just a longer time for the parents to get worked up over the concept of closing...once you make the decision to close the school you ought to have a reasonable time for orientation for the students and parents and a reasonable time for reassigned staff...I think six months is long enough.

Dr. Holt seemed to believe that parents would continue to resist school closure until the very end. Because he was the one who received the brunt of parental complaints, a shorter time between the announcement and final school closure would have given him an advantage in fulfilling his administrative responsibilities. After implementing a school closing, merging schools, and finalizing school boundaries, Dr. Holt's responsibilities toward the closing school were ended.

As Dr. Holt indicated, the Lincoln School District's obligations toward the Evergreen community ended when the school was closed. This characteristic procedure of school districts was noted by Bussard (1981), who indicated that school districts usually terminate their responsibilities toward a community when a school closes.

The Last Day at Evergreen:
A First Grade Classroom Vignette

The following vignette was recorded during the last day at Evergreen. It demonstrates the range of adjustments the school community needed to make in transferring children to Woodhaven School.

It was the last day of school in the first-grade classroom. The children were being assigned to second grades in three different schools for the following fall, and six of the children were assigned to Woodhaven.

The mood in the classroom was one of excitement, mixed with a bit of nostalgia, especially for the adults. Almost all of the children and teachers were dressed in their red and white Evergreen T-shirts. Two room parents, with encouragement from a teacher, had visited each classroom in the building on the preceding day, reminding the staff and students to wear their Evergreen T-shirts the last day of school.

Twenty-seven first graders, three room parents, and a student teacher had planned a surprise party for the first

grade teacher. Similar festivities had taken place in other classrooms as the students thanked their teachers in the way they knew best: parties. On the bulletin board were posters and a special card for the teacher, with each child's signature.

Each child made a special picture that he/she presented individually to the teacher in front of the classroom. The teacher asked one room mother, "Will you take each child's picture when the kids come up to give me their drawings?" The mother then used the teacher's camera and took a picture of each child. One by one, the children went up to their teacher, presented her with their drawings, and in turn received a hug, kiss, and special wish. When a child presented a picture that meant something special to the teacher, both she and the child had tears in their eyes. The party continued with flowers, gifts, and a snack for everyone. Each child received an award and a copy of the final school program, which the children signed like an autograph book.

The students then formed a large group to sing familiar songs and share their favorite activities of the school year. They had many experiences from which to choose: five students decided camp was their favorite activity; five others thought visiting their new school was a favorite activity; field trips, such as a visit to the fire station were mentioned; several students remembered the final school

program, and others recalled a recent field-day competition. One gregarious student mentioned all his friends as his favorite experience during the school year. The morning concluded with talk about summer vacation and the distribution of report cards.

As the students left the building, two local television stations filmed the final event while the police safety officer, crossing guard, principal, and several teachers talked to the students leaving Evergreen for the last time.

Evergreen had officially, and for the last time, closed its doors for summer vacation. The following fall, all the students would be attending new schools. What was in store for the students, parents, and teachers transferring to Woodhaven School forms the basis for the following ethnography.

Summary

In observations and interviews with parents and Evergreen staff members, it was evident the Evergreen community appreciated the two year period that anticipated the school closing; they indicated it was a positive element in their adjustment to the forthcoming school merger. The school community had an established time in which to transfer their sense of belonging and to become accustomed to the fact that a change in schools was inevitable. The adjustment to change was assisted by special school events

during the final two years. The only group that appeared to react negatively to the school closing was those who had short notice about the transfer of their children to Woodhaven School. A change in the planned ecological transition was difficult for some parents to accept.

The school principal, with the support of the Parent Teacher Association and the school board, informed parents of the closing and held hearings in which parents' questions could be answered. The principal kept parents informed through communications in the Parent Teacher Association newsletters. Communication was also assisted by the teachers, who planned many classroom events involving students and parents. Students participated in special closing activities to commemorate their feelings for Evergreen School. The Evergreen staff provided the Evergreen community with a sense of closure through the final school program, "A Link to the Past." The principal and teachers guided students to look forward to the merger of the Evergreen student body into their new elementary school; this they accomplished primarily through classroom discussions and school visitations. In the end, the community of parents and students accepted the closing of Evergreen through the help of the central administration, the school principal, and all Evergreen staff members. It was observed that the staff members, who worked hard to

accomplish positive attitudes among students and parents,
were the most disheartened by the school's closing.

CHAPTER IV

A SCHOOL CONSOLIDATION: WOODHAVEN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

For the reader to understand the mesosystem operating at Woodhaven School, a description of the physical, temporal, and social settings of the school population is necessary. These settings are discussed in detail in the following sections.

Overview of the Geographical Setting

Woodhaven School is one of 39 elementary schools in the Lincoln School District. Lincoln, an urban school district, is located in a midwestern city of the same name with a population of approximately 130,000 residents (Lincoln Demographic Data, 1983). The city is a state governmental center and the home of several large industries, including an automotive factory. The city is composed primarily of blue-collar workers. A major state university is located nearby, and many white-collar workers and professionals live in the surrounding suburbs.

During the 1970s and 1980s, Lincoln experienced rising unemployment due to the area's economy and a steady rise in inflation. Also during this period, the school district's student population gradually declined, resulting in the closing of a high school, a junior high school, and

seven elementary schools (Lincoln Document, 1984). In addition, many families moved to the suburbs or enrolled their children in private schools. Overall, in 1983, public school districts in both the city and the suburbs experienced a decline in enrollments, whereas enrollments in nonpublic schools increased slightly. (Lincoln Demographic Data, 1983).

School Population of Woodhaven

In the 1983-84 school year, Woodhaven experienced two major changes that affected its enrollment. The first was the readjustment of the student population from a kindergarten through sixth grade configuration to a kindergarten through fifth grade one. All sixth graders in the area were transferred to the school district's first middle school. The second change was the transfer of 77 kindergarten through fifth-grade students from Evergreen School to Woodhaven.

In fall 1983, Woodhaven's total enrollment was 430 students, including 77 children from Evergreen and 90 pre-primary pupils enrolled in the special education program. The pre-primary pupils, ages two and one-half to six, were bused to Woodhaven from areas throughout Lincoln. Students from the former Evergreen area were also bused to Woodhaven. The combined student population made Woodhaven the fourth largest of the 39 elementary schools in the Lincoln School District. (Lincoln Demographic Data, 1983).

School Community

The area surrounding Woodhaven includes single-family dwellings located in a planned subdivision built in the 1960s and 1970s. Approximately 50 percent of the families living in the area are minorities with low to medium incomes (Lincoln Demographic Data, 1983). Since the area is naturally integrated, the community was not involved in the school district's court-ordered integration plan, which mandated the busing of some students. Thus Woodhaven remained a neighborhood school.

Yet, the community seemed to be changing. According to one resident teacher, Mr. Daniels, the area appeared to be changing from a population with some professionals to a blue collar residential area. Mr. Daniels described the Woodhaven community environment as follows:

I think it is a mixed community and I think it is a community that is beginning to stabilize after a period of transition. I think that creates challenges for the teacher, but I also think it creates a unique situation for children because they are exposed to a diversity of socioeconomic and cultural groups. Now you ask, what do I think of the people that have been here for a long time? I assume 'by a long time,' that you mean the small core that we have at the school that has been here for a period of five years or more. I think they are basically strong, middle class, relatively well educated, many professionals, somewhat snobbish, and I think they are a little bit afraid of the groups that have come in here during the transitional period when the community was in flux. I'm referring primarily to the Woodhaven people, the active parents; that's the population that I'm used to dealing with.

Children bused to Woodhaven from the Evergreen area are primarily from lower-middle-income white families who reside in single-family dwellings in an older residential area. In addition, both the Woodhaven and Evergreen areas have some low-income families with one or both parents unemployed. Nearly 80 students were bused to Woodhaven. Initially, the Evergreen area designated for transfer to Woodhaven was considered within walking distance, but because students would have had to cross a busy four-lane road, bus transportation was provided. The background of planning the change in schools and the influence of racial balance in that transfer are described in the next section.

Influence of the Federal Courts

From 1978 to 1983, the ethnic population of the neighborhood surrounding Woodhaven increased steadily until Woodhaven School enrolled the highest percentage of minority students agreed on by the school district and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP). Since the school district continued to be guided by a federal court order for racial integration, it was imperative that the total minority student population not exceed the federally set guidelines. In an attempt to relieve the pressure of a minority enrollment that exceeded the limits established by the court, the school district's administration in concurrence with the NAACP readjusted its boundary recommendations when Evergreen School was being

closed. A school administrator, Dr. Holt, summarized the school board's decision:

We are under court order for desegregation. As we set up the boundaries, we were originally going to take a piece of Evergreen and put it into Riverside School. We then were going to take an equal piece from Riverside and put it into Woodhaven School. The problem with the initial decision was that the portion that we were going to put into Woodhaven was basically black. We had to submit our plan to the NAACP. When we sat down and talked with them and discussed how the boundaries were going to affect the various schools, they pointed out that our plans at Woodhaven would increase the number of minority students. We considered that information and then took a piece of Evergreen which is relatively low socioeconomic status, but white, that would reduce the total black population at Woodhaven. The NAACP agreed with this plan. But, the reaction of the transferred community was that it was not safe for the kids to cross Ridgewood Road. They told us at the hearing that if you can provide for the safety of our kids going across Ridgewood, then it's O.K.

With the busing of students from Evergreen to Woodhaven, Woodhaven's percentage of minority students was lowered to within the limits mandated by a federal court order for racial integration of the schools (Lincoln Demographic Data, 1983).

Physical Setting: Spatial Mapping

Built in 1960, Woodhaven is a modern, light-brick elementary school; all rooms are on ground level. Woodhaven is one of the larger schools in the district, with the potential for 25 classrooms. During the 1983-84 school year, the school building was used to capacity. Figure 4.1 shows the placement of Woodhaven within a planned subdivision in

Lincoln. As Figure 4.2 indicates, Woodhaven currently houses 14 kindergarten through fifth-grade classrooms, a special education resource room, six classrooms housing the pre-primary special education unit, a media center used by the media specialist and reading teacher, two classrooms housing the science department, and one classroom used for storage and reading instruction.

Woodhaven is located in the center of a subdivision; a large park area adjoins the school playground. The school is surrounded by acres of open space, giving a feeling of spaciousness to the setting. Playground areas are located on the north, south, and west sides of the building. Next to the north playground and adjacent to the school is the school parking lot.

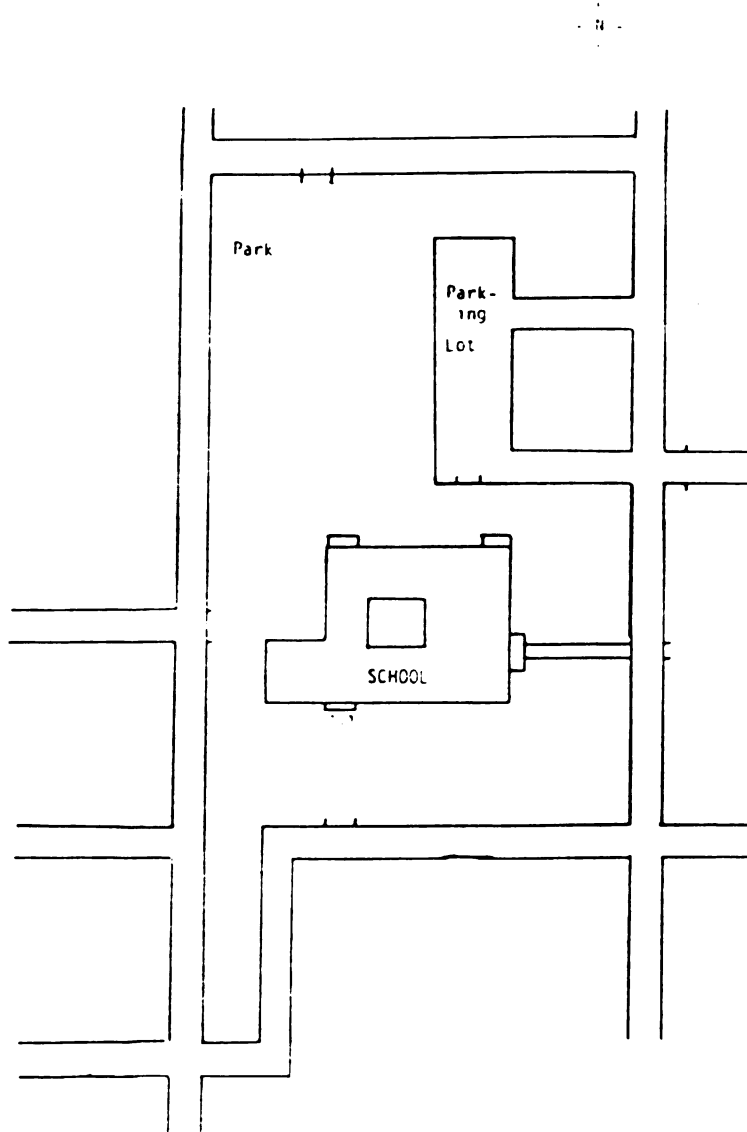


Figure 4.1

Woodhaven School

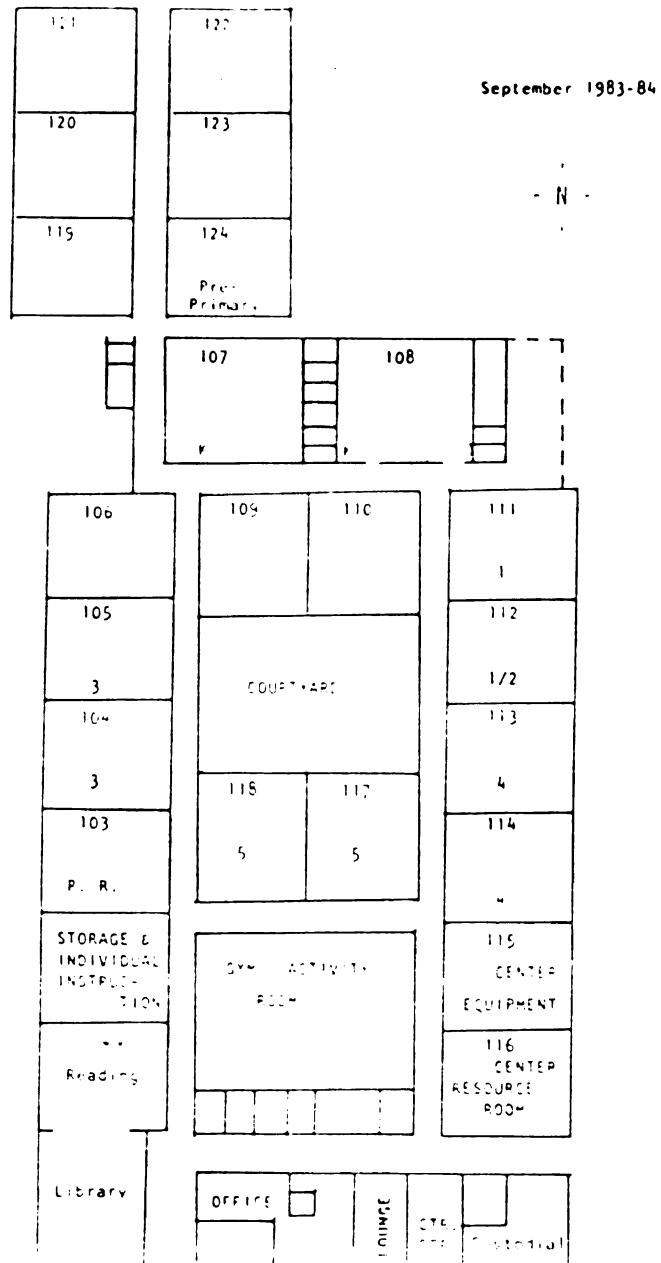


Figure 4.2

Classrooms in Woodhaven School

A Place in Time: Temporal Mapping

In 1983, the first year after Evergreen closed, school began the week after labor Day and continued for 38 weeks. There were two weeks off for Christmas vacation and one week off for spring vacation. Students and teachers were dismissed for summer vacation the second week in June.

The school day began for teachers at 8:00 a.m.; students arrived at 8:40 a.m. During the 40-minute planning period in the morning, teachers prepared their classrooms for the day's activities, duplicated worksheets for students, and picked up mail in their boxes at the main office. Many teachers also stopped to chat with each other in the teachers' lounge next to the office.

Students had a 50 minute lunch break, whereas teachers had a 40-minute "duty free" lunch break. The lunch period was supervised by the principal; he was assisted by lunchroom aides who helped with meals in the gym and watched the students on the playground. The students ate lunch in two sessions and then went outside to play on the north playground. School was dismissed at 3:00 p.m., and teachers were free to leave 15 minutes later.

In September, immediately after Labor Day, the teachers had two planning days to organize their rooms and participate in staff meetings before the students started school. The principal and secretary began their duties two weeks before the teaching staff officially arrived. During

the two weeks before school actually started, all the transferred Evergreen teachers were in their rooms unloading boxes, arranging furniture and supplies, and attempting to settle into a new environment. Also, most of the resident Woodhaven staff arrived throughout the week before school to organize their rooms, meet the new principal and secretary, and prepare for the coming year.

When the school year commenced, some staff members were observed after school working in their rooms, talking with each other, and preparing study materials for their students. Also, each night after school, both Boy and Girl Scout troops used the building. In fact, the school was so busy with different outside groups, that the secretary commented at the beginning of the school year, "This school has the largest number of Scout troops in one building that I have ever seen. There are always groups here after school and in the evening." Other outside recreational groups also used the building during the evening hours.

School Participants: Social Mapping

Students

The Woodhaven student population contained both regular and special education children. The regular education group included 340 children in three kindergarten sessions, two first grades, a first/second split, a second grade, a second/third split, two third grades, two fourth and two fifth grades. The pre-primary special education

group included 80 children. Table 4.1 indicates the composition of each regular education classroom. As shown in Table 4.1, only 15 of the 68 students who transferred from Evergreen were minorities. Just the morning kindergarten sessions received transferred students because the bus schedule could only provide transportation for kindergarteners in the morning. With this exception, the resident and transferred students were distributed evenly throughout the grades.

In spring 1984, the pre-primary unit added another class, which brought the total pre-primary population to almost 100 children. Because of the students' age and the pre-primary wing's physical isolation, little interaction occurred between the pre-primary and regular education students.

Table 4.1

Woodhaven Student Population: Transferred and Resident
Majority and Minority Students

Grade	Number of Evergreen Area Students	Number of Minority Evergreen Students	Resident Woodhaven Students	Resident Minority Students	Total Number of Students
K	11	2	10	7	21
K	7	1	16	10	23
K	0	0	18	7	18
1	10	1	14	10	24
1	4	1	20	12	24
1/2	4	1	19	9	23
2	4	2	22	14	26
2/3	4	0	20	8	24
3	5	2	24	10	29
3	5	2	24	11	29
4	7	2	20	9	27
4	8	0	22	13	28
5	3	1	27	11	30
5	3	1	25	17	28
--	--	--	--	--	--
Total	76	15	226	144	342

Parents

The major organization through which parents could express their concerns and interests was the Parent Teacher Association. The controlling group behind the Parent Teacher Association was the executive board which consisted of a small group of resident parents and a transferred parent who agreed to accept the position of mother vice-president. As the year progressed, several other transferred parents became more active in the Woodhaven Parent Teacher Association and assumed chairmanships of several committees such as the Reading Is Fundamental committee.

Staff

The teaching staff at Woodhaven included 18 classroom teachers, 4 aides for the pre-primary unit, and 3 support staff: a reading teacher, a media specialist, and a special education resource room teacher. The secretary and principal shared the main office; the science department secretary had an office down the hall.

Table 4.2 shows the tenure staff members, as well as their length of time on the faculty at Woodhaven. The average number of years in teaching among the total staff was 14 years, whereas the average number of years for the classroom teachers was 17. The average length of years at Woodhaven for the total staff was seven years; the resident teaching faculty had been at Woodhaven an average of 12 years.

Table 4.2

Tenure of Teachers at Woodhaven

Grade	Years Teaching	Years at Woodhaven
K	15	1
K	13	8
K	18	15
1	18	16
1	17	1*
1/2	24	23
2	18	18
2/3	19	16
3	17	1
3	16	7
4	18	1*
4	11	1*
5	24	12
5	8	8
Pre-primary	13	5
Pre-primary	10	5
Pre-primary	3	1
Pre-primary	6	2
Support Staff	7	1*
Support Staff	23	3
Support Staff	15	6

* Transferred Evergreen staff

Support Staff

For the most part, the 18 classroom teachers were responsible for educating the students at Woodhaven. They had the help of a media specialist who was in the building four days a week and a reading teacher who was in the building three and one half days. These support personnel had assignments in other schools the rest of the week.

The principal and secretary coordinated the students' and teachers' activities. They also regulated the services of the many specialists who visited the building to help the classroom teachers. Support personnel included speech teachers, school social workers, school psychologists, pre-primary aides, music and art specialists, special education coordinators, and university personnel. The principal counted 93 professionals or semi-professionals who served Woodhaven in some capacity during the first semester of the 1983-84 school year. Major additions to the educational staff at Woodhaven were student teachers who worked in classrooms and university professors who offered a college reading program at the school. Twice a week, college students in the university reading program visited the classrooms of teachers who were willing to participate in the program. The college students assisted in classroom activities and taught small-group reading classes as the year progressed.

Summary

At the time of this study, Woodhaven School had an enrollment of 430 students: 266 resident students, 76 bused from the former Evergreen area, and 90 in a pre-primary special education program. The teaching staff included 18 classroom teachers and three support staff members, as well as many additional school district personnel and volunteers from a local university. The PTA served as a vehicle whereby parents became involved in schoolwide activities and programs.

The interactions of the participants in the mesosystem at Woodhaven formed the basis for the following three chapters, which describe the interrelationships that developed among resident and transferred students, parents, and staff members.

CHAPTER V

THE ADJUSTMENTS OF STUDENTS

Introduction: Key Assertions

Transferring to a different school after a school closing affects students in many different ways. The students' adjustment process had several components which are described as assertions and are based on the collection of data in this ethnography.

1. The transferred students related positively to the simultaneous transfer of school personnel from the closed school to the receiving school. In particular, the principal appeared to be a central figure in facilitating adjustment to the new school.

2. The students' adjustment to the new school developed gradually over time.

3. The students' transferred to Woodhaven eventually accepted the provision of bus transportation.

4. Resident students went through adjustments to strange teachers and students that were similar to those transferred students went through.

5. Outside the classroom, students formed many friendships in the informal atmosphere of the playground and through extracurricular activities such as scouting.

6. Within the classroom, transferred and resident students developed friendships after an initial period of adjustment to the new school environment.

7. Transferred students maintained ties to the closed school, even when they had adjusted well to the new school. The older the student, the harder it was for him/her to accept the transfer.

8. The academic performance of transferred students did not change dramatically after they were in the new school. A statistical test revealed that no significant difference existed between transferred and resident students in terms of academic performance in the year following school merger.

The preceding assertions concerning students' adjustments were based on the fieldwork conducted from January to June 1983 before Evergreen closed, and from September 1983 to June 1984, the first year of Evergreen's consolidation with Woodhaven. Throughout the data-collection period, the researcher had opportunities to verify or disconfirm the assertions. The combination of participant observations, sociometric questionnaires, a small-group workshop of key informants, classroom journal writings, and student interviews provided the researcher with a multitude of useful information.

Findings from Literature

Before developing key linkages from the data on students, it was important to examine related literature on group dynamics, social interactions, and social cognition of children. Because the closed Evergreen school community was studied as a group, it seemed helpful to review group dynamics in formulating valid interpretations of the data. Slawski (1981) defined a primary group as a naturally occurring group to which one belongs, with a reference group as one with which a member identifies in his/her imagination and from which he/she learns certain norms of behavior.

A real group has three basic characteristics. First, it is comprised of a number of individuals who interact with one another on the bases of established patterns. Second, individuals who interact define themselves as group members. Third, the individuals are defined by others as members of the group (Slawski, 1981).

Using Slawski's basic description of groups, it was evident that the staff, parents, and students from Evergreen had to cope with major changes in their established friendship patterns and participate in the formation of new groups at Woodhaven. In an examination of peer relations in childhood, (Campbell, 1969) supported the importance of peer interactions and peer relations in the broader social context. Fieldwork at Woodhaven confirms the notion of the peer group as a socializing agent, an important concept in

describing the developing relationships between the former Evergreen students and the Woodhaven students. Campbell (1969) also recognized the influence of the family and peer group on children, stating:

Although the family is rightfully viewed as a prime influence in the child's individuality, his activities in the company of other children contribute to his developing picture of the social world, help to establish his identity, and provide him an opportunity for group experience relevant not only to present functioning but to future social relationships as well. (p. 303)

Understanding personal and social characteristics of the children by observing their interactions in the school environment was one aim of the researcher. In reviewing influencing processes in the peer groups, Campbell (1969) concluded:

Patterns of peer relations offer considerable variability. The individual child and the group as a whole are subject to a number of factors that tend to channel actions in particular directions. The forces at work are of various sorts. Some are inherent in the character of the situation; others derive from characteristics of children--as recipients of influence as well as influence agents; and when adults are participants, they too shape the course of children's functions in groups. (p. 309)

Shantz (1975) revealed the importance of understanding the development of social cognition in children. She wrote,

It provides a more complete picture of the child's cognitive development indicating what types of concepts and processes are evident in both the nonsocial and social domains at particular age periods. Second, the way in which children conceptualize others presumably has an important effect of their social behavior with

others. The concepts of people held by children and adults make possible a system of sufficient predictive utility that one can interact with others adaptively and efficiently. (p. 258)

Glidewell, Kantor, Smith, and Stringer (1966) defined socialization in the classroom as,

The process by which an individual learns the alternative modes of behavior available in various social settings and the consequences of adopting each mode. The socialization process may also be viewed as a continuing sequence of interpersonal interactions by which an individual first acquires and then modifies a position in a social system. Three of the several dimensions along which one may differentiate an individual's current or changing position in a social system are (a) emotional acceptance, (b) personal competence, and (c) social power. (pp 222-223)

According to Glidewell, et al., emotional acceptance refers to the affective aspect of interpersonal relations. Competence is the ability to do well in the school situation, and social power is children's ability to influence others in the classroom social structure.

In reviewing literature on the use of sociometric questionnaires, Glidewell et al. noted,

Classroom social structures develop quickly, remain relatively stable, produce reasonably accurate perceptions by individuals of their own position in the structure, are composed of stable pairs and subgroups of mutually attracted and respected children, plus a few continuing isolates. The subgroups, their individual members, and the isolates can be differentiated with respect to at least three variables: emotional acceptance, perceived competence, and social power. (p. 227)

Positive Effects of Transferred School
Personnel on Student Adjustment

Assertion 1: The transferred students related positively to the simultaneous transfer of school personnel from the closed school to the receiving school. In particular, the principal appeared to be a central figure in facilitating adjustment to the new school.

The first year following consolidation was a time of adjustment for both the transferred and resident students. In the classroom, students were coping with new teachers and new classmates. The transferred students were also adjusting to a totally new physical environment, to riding a bus to and from school, and to the loss of many former friends and teachers.

For the 57 former Evergreen students in grades one through five, seeing familiar faces at Woodhaven facilitated the transition to the receiving school. On the first day of school, as they got off the school bus, the students were greeted by the school principal, Mr. Adams. The children immediately recognized their former principal.

In recalling the first few days of school, many transferred parents commented that they especially appreciated the time the principal spent in greeting their children. One mother mentioned that her daughters' recognition of Evergreen's former principal and secretary helped them accept more easily the change in schools. Mrs. Jones related,

I thought they (Carol and Paulette) were going to be scared with Carol going to a new

school...Carol thought it might be difficult 'cause she missed the school down here. The thing that really helped her was when she seen Mr. Adams and Mrs. Jacks. I thought, Oh, wow. It's not going to be that difficult. Carol knew there were some old faces that she knew. She got a big smile on her face like it's not all new and all different. I think that helped.

Mrs. Jones had been observed at school activities the previous year at Evergreen and was interviewed the year following school consolidation. Her daughter Carol was repeating first grade, and Paulette was just starting kindergarten at Woodhaven. Mrs. Jones, who had not been active in Evergreen's activities, indicated she did not know what to expect in the school transfer. She commented that she had not opposed the school closing or the change in receiving schools. In fact, she had not even been aware that Evergreen was going to close until late in the school's final year. In the fall, Mrs. Jones accepted the school change without question. Her only reservations about the new school were related to her daughters' worry about the unknown, the new school. In the interview, Mrs. Jones emphasized that her immediate concerns about the new school were allayed when her daughters recognized some familiar faculty members from Evergreen.

Interviews with transferred students, as well as parents, revealed the transferred community felt the placement of former Evergreen staff members at Woodhaven was a positive link in the transfer process; that the students appreciated recognizing familiar faces at the new school was

verified through observations in and out of the classroom, in the small-group workshops, and in individual interviews.

In May 1984, after almost nine months of school, 19 transferred and 14 resident students discussed how they had felt about Woodhaven in the fall and how they felt about the school at the end of the year. In reviewing the student interviews and year long observations, the researcher noted that the transferred personnel stood out as important factors contributing to the students' adjustment to Woodhaven. In particular, half of the interviewed students commented on the positive role the transferred principal, Mr. Adams, had played in helping them accept the new school. Paul, a fourth grader, related his feelings and those of other transferred students in a small-group discussion in the fall: "I like having Mr. Adams because I know him."

The resident students formed their own judgments of the new principal during the first months of school. Based on the positive comments made by newly transferred students, as well as their own experiences, many resident students soon came to accept their new principal. Gail, a resident fifth grader, shared her feelings about Mr. Adams:

I like the new teachers and Mr. Adams and Mrs. Jacks better than I did last year. They are nicer. They understand better than some of the teachers. This year Mr. Adams has been nicer and he treats the kids like they should be treated. Like if someone gets in a fight, and instead just right away punishing them, he talks it out and then decides with the teacher what a good punishment is.

In the same light, almost every interview with transferred and resident students indicated the classroom teacher had played a major role in promoting a positive attitude about the school. When students were asked, "What do you like about Woodhaven?" they frequently mentioned their teachers. Janet, a transferred fourth grader, said, "I liked the Evergreen teachers coming over here because I would have been lost without knowing anyone." Matt remembered, "I was worried when I first came here in the fall. I felt like a new kid in school. When I heard some of the teachers came over, that helped me have confidence."

Factors in the Adjustment of Transferred Students

Breaking the Ties to Evergreen

Assertion 2: The students' adjustment to a new school developed gradually.

Time was an essential factor in the students' adjustment process because the tie to Evergreen remained, especially with the older students. Mrs. Jackson, a fourth-grade transferred teacher, commented at the end of the year about her English class: "Every time we have a spelling test, they <the Evergreen students> want to spell Evergreen as an extra word. I keep telling them Evergreen is no more, but they still want to write Evergreen."

During the year-end interviews, the resident students remembered their new friends' conversations about

Evergreen. Suzanne, a first grader, said, "The kids talk about Evergreen. They said Evergreen was the best school that they went to. They still say that." Ling, a fourth grader, said, "They said they didn't like this school and they liked Evergreen better, in the beginning, but not now." As expressed in the interviews, transferred students still talked about Evergreen during the first year of consolidation. As time passed, though, the ties to the former school appeared to diminish.

The transferred students who were interviewed in May 1984 accepted Woodhaven to varying degrees. Two lower-grade students placed in resident teacher's classrooms indicated they really liked Woodhaven. Helen, a second grader, said, "It's fun. The teachers are fine. I like Mrs. Wood." Vicky, also a second grader, commented, "There are different teachers. I like it. There are old teachers that we had at Evergreen and new teachers at Woodhaven."

At the end of the first year, 5 out of 19 pupils indicated they still preferred Evergreen to Woodhaven but said Woodhaven was okay. Janet, a fourth grader, said, "It's okay now, but I still wish Evergreen was open. It's too bad they closed Evergreen." The majority of the students, nine in all, revealed a mild acceptance of Woodhaven and said they thought the school was fine. When asked how they thought the following year would be, most of the students,

especially the fourth graders, thought the next year would be better.

For a handful of students, time was a prime factor in growing to accept the new school. Initial feelings of apprehension during the first few days and weeks of school subsided as all of the Woodhaven students began to socialize with one another. By the end of the school year, assimilation, although moderate for some students, was almost complete.

The factors that helped solidify the adjustment process in the first year of school consolidation are discussed in the following sections.

Role of Busing

Assertion 3: The students transferred to Woodhaven eventually accepted the provision of bus transportation.

Students' reacted in various ways to being bused to Woodhaven. Some students liked riding the bus, whereas others indicated they did not like it at all. Their opinions, however, were not concerned with the issue of having to be bused to a school farther away from their homes. The students' main objection concerned the bus driver and her rules and regulations for riding the bus. Marie, a second grader, revealed in an interview, "I don't like riding the bus because everyone is talking and it hurts my ears. I didn't like the bus in the beginning, because I

didn't like the bus driver. It was scary at the beginning of the year."

Some resident students thought they would like riding the bus. One resident parent described her child's envious thoughts about bus transportation by saying, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the street."

Teachers saw busing as a potential problem. Sherry, the reading teacher, was concerned about the bus schedule, which dictated that the students be on the bus by the 3:00 p.m. dismissal bell. Hence bused students, especially the younger ones, had to be dismissed five minutes earlier than the other students, and thereby lost out on 25 minutes or more of instructional time a week. By spring, however, even the concern about the bus schedule had abated. Sherry said, "The biggest problem is the busing and that seems to be minimal at this point. The concern <of the students> was with missing the bus and I don't see that concern now. The schedule is just a little later than it was."

Mr. Daniels, a resident teacher, commented on the busing:

I think the biggest problem was that they <the Evergreen students> had to be singled out somehow because they were the ones who had to get on the bus. They were designated as the bus kids. That almost had a negative ring to it and that is one thing that I'm not too happy about. They have to leave five minutes early and I have to make sure I have their papers passed out. I think that it is unfortunate that they have to be designated as special because that tends to create a feeling of separateness.

Tom Harrison, a transferred special education teacher, noted the negative implications arising from the busing issue. He related:

At the beginning of the year, the students that came over were called "Evergreeners," and while that isn't a negative term, it is a term that sets aside a certain number of the student body and says that they are different--not good or bad--just different. I think that carried over to the students. Now, I think most of the students are crossing over. I think it has been an easier adjustment for the students than for the adults. It's not a close relationship because none of the kids see each other once they are bused back to their own neighborhood. They don't have a lot of school activities going over to each other's house, so the relationships are going to take a longer time to develop than if they were from the same neighborhood. I think kids' relationships are developed in a more relaxed activity or over play than in school, where things are more regimented, with little time for interactions during those times.

The school office referred to the transferred students as "Evergreeners" only once. Perhaps because the former Evergreen teachers objected to that distinction, subsequent notices that were directed to bused students did not refer to them as Evergreen children.

In time, objections to the bus schedule appeared to be ironed out. During the second year of school merger, students became less concerned with missing the school bus, and teachers also appeared less concerned with the early-dismissal procedures. In fact, fewer problems existed the second year as compared to the first. Perhaps the bus program functioned more smoothly because of a change in bus

drivers, the students' growing responsibilities, and the adjustment to busing.

Adjustments of the Resident Students

Assertion 4: Resident students went through adjustments to strange teachers and students that were similar to those transferred students went through.

The resident students, as well as the transferred children, had to adjust to the new administration, teachers, and peers. The most significant adjustments took place during the first few weeks of school.

Resident students had to adjust to having five new classroom teachers in the building. Many resident pupils found themselves in a classroom with an unfamiliar teacher. Also, the influx of more than 70 new children added a new dimension to student interactions and friendships patterns both within and outside the classroom. In addition, pupils experienced many changes in administrative procedures from previous years. In particular, many resident students welcomed the free seating arrangement during the lunch period.

Adjustments to new peers and new teachers were most extensive for resident fourth graders who had two transferred teachers and 15 new classmates. One resident student, Joy, who joined the small-group workshops at mid-year, found the influx of Evergreen staff and students traumatic. Joy's mother wrote the following note when giving

her daughter permission to participate in the small-group workshops:

Thank you for asking Joy to participate in your program. Our school this year was, also, a new experience for the original students. Heather came home at the beginning of the year and started crying. The school had changed, some of her friends were transferred, all new teachers and a new principal (and the Evergreen kids knew the teachers and likewise). A new principal means different set ups for almost all familiar things, etc. She really likes it now, but we-oldies-all had surprises, too. Thank you very much again.

Joy's reaction during the first weeks of school consolidation indicated that she, like some other resident students, was apprehensive and fearful of the new Woodhaven environment.

For other resident students, the change in administration was uneventful. In a January 1984 interview, Mr. and Mrs. Fuller described their children's reactions to the change in administration, teachers, and students. Their three children were attending Woodhaven; a first and a fourth grader were in transferred teachers' classrooms. Mrs. Fuller commented, "I think, from my kids' point of view, that there is no change whatsoever. They have always liked this school--to a certain extent. My kids have never had any complaints whatsoever." Mr. Fuller related, "So far, we haven't had any problems, not at all. All the teachers are really nice and the kids know they had better behave."

The Fullers' confidence in the Woodhaven school mesosystem was not altered by a change in administration,

teachers, or students. This also appeared to be true for students. Interactions with the transferred students developed naturally, and friendships evolved between new and old groups. Students from the Evergreen area easily made friends with other resident children. The mesosystems at Woodhaven provided opportunities for the development of interrelationships which supported the establishment of friendships.

It is interesting that, in the case of the Fuller children and many other students, the friendships that developed were between minority resident and majority transferred children, that is across racial groups. Throughout the data-collection period, the researcher observed that friendships between old and new groups appeared to grow gradually, with little apparent regard to race.

Development of Friendship Patterns Outside the Classroom

Assertion 5: Outside the classroom, students formed many friendships in the informal atmosphere of the playground and extra-curricular activities such as scouting.

The transferred and resident students had many opportunities to interact outside the classroom. More than half of the children in the small groups indicated that playground activities had facilitated their adjustment to Woodhaven. Many students viewed the playground as one school

territory where they had control. In the classroom, children basically were under their teachers' direction, whereas they were allowed more free time on the playground. During lunch, two separate groups of older and younger students had a 20-minute playground period which was supervised by lunch aides rather than teachers.

The transferred students, in particular, were impressed with the play equipment at Woodhaven. During the small-group workshops, children frequently mentioned the playground as one of the primary reasons they liked Woodhaven. In response to the question, "What do you like about Woodhaven?" Brent, a first grader answered, "I like this school. It has more toys....It has swings and monkey bars to play all over the playground." Another first grader, Jimmy, remembered his former school's playground in a manner similar to Brent's. When Jimmy was asked "What do you remember about Evergreen?" he answered, "I remember the playground. They had the horses and monkey bars and a big field." When Janice, a first grader, was asked, "How would you make new friends?" she said, "I'll make new friends by playing with them a lot--like on the swings." As Janice indicated, for many students the playground provided a superb opportunity for making friends.

The lunch room also provided frequent opportunities for student interactions. Upon entering Woodhaven, Mr. Adams initiated a free seating arrangement during lunch.

With the new seating policy, students could eat lunch with whomever they liked, rather than just the children in their own classrooms. This policy, which initially caused the consternation among many of the lunch aides and frequently raised the noise level in the lunch room, was popular with all students.

Mr. Adam's policies were popular among the transferred students and their parents, and they quickly were accepted by the resident students as well. Joy, a resident fourth grader, said, "Mr. Adams is nice. I like the way he runs the school. I like the lunch room." Bruce, a third-grade resident student, commented, "I like it better this year....We got new playground equipment and the lunch and library have changed. I like to eat with my friends." A few policy changes, therefore, made possible many peer interactions on the playground and in the lunch room.

Other factors that may have helped students achieve a sense of belonging to Woodhaven were the extra activities planned by classroom teachers and the after-school functions sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association. During the third month of school consolidation, the upper-grade teachers organized a fourth-and fifth-grade Christmas program, which had been a traditional Evergreen function. Also, the Parent Teacher Association organized a Christmas walk-through and bazaar, a traditional Woodhaven function. With the principal's and the teachers' support, the

consolidated student body enjoyed the most popular activities from each school. The mesosystem at Woodhaven provided a positive merging of Evergreen and Woodhaven microsystems for the consolidated school community.

The after-school scouting program provided children an additional opportunity to interact and socialize with their peers. The Woodhaven Parent Teacher Association strongly supported both Boy and Girl Scouts, and two resident teachers were Scout leaders.

Mrs. Miller, a mother who was active in Girl Scouts, said that many of the troops at Evergreen had been split when the school closed. Her daughter, Janice, joined the Scouts at Woodhaven even though she initially had only a few friends in the troop. Janice and many other transferred and resident students, developed new friendships through the scouting program. The microsystems at Woodhaven, the playground, the lunch room, and the scouting program, all contributed to the students' development of interactions among peers and adults.

Development of Friendship Patterns Within the Classroom

Findings from Sociometry

Assertion 6: Within the classroom, transferred and resident students developed friendships after an initial period of adjusting to the new school environment.

In an attempt to measure the socializations and interactions of the transferred and resident students, the

researcher administered a sociometric questionnaire to all students. They were asked to indicate which children in their classroom were best friends, good friends, okay friends, kids they didn't know well, and those whom they didn't know at all. (See Appendix G: Sociometric Questionnaire for Grades One Through Five.) Questionnaires were administered in September 1983 and May 1984. A total raw score was tabulated for each student for each questionnaire administered. The researcher listed the raw scores from the questionnaires, and on the basis of these scores, rank ordered transferred and resident students in each classroom. (Appendix G: Sample Ranking on Transferred Students on Sociometric Questions).

The transferred students. Forty four transferred students were ranked according to their placement among all of the children in the respective classrooms. The rankings in each classroom were divided into thirds. Data from the accumulated rank ordering of the students were tabulated and recorded (Appendix G: Comparative Ranking of Transferred Students on Sociometric Questions According to Grade: September 1983 and May 1984). In September 1983, 7 of the 44 transferred students ranked in the top third of the total classrooms, 11 ranked in the middle third, and 26 ranked in the bottom third

In May 1984, the rankings of the transferred students had changed; more students now ranked in the upper

third of their classrooms. Fifteen of the transferred students ranked in the top third of the total classrooms, 12 ranked in the middle third, and 17 ranked in the bottom third.

The changes in transferred students' rank order within the classrooms between September 1983 and May 1984 indicate 14 transferred students rose in rank order by 10 to 18 places. Seven students rose in rank order by four to nine places. Fifteen transferred students maintained their status, rising or falling from zero to three places. Seven transferred students fell in status by four to nine places, and only three students significantly dropped in status by 10 to 16 places (Appendix G). By May, many of the transferred students had been assimilated into the mainstream of the Woodhaven student body and were interacting well with their classmates.

The resident students. The 204 resident students were rank ordered according to their placement among all of the children in their respective classrooms, and the rankings in each classroom were divided into thirds. Data from the accumulated rank ordering of the students were tabulated and recorded (See Appendix G:: Comparative Ranking of Resident Students on Sociometric Questions According to Grade: September 1983 and May 1984). In September 1983, 77 resident students ranked in the top third of the total

classrooms, 78 ranked in the middle third, and 59 ranked in the bottom third.

In May 1984, the rankings of the resident students had changed; fewer of them scored in the top third of their classroom. Sixty-six students were in the upper third of the total classrooms, 70 were in the middle third, and 68 were in the bottom third.

The changes in resident students' rank order within the classrooms between September 1983 and May 1984 indicate 11 students rose 10 to 18 places in rank order among their classmates. Fifty students rose in rank order by four to nine places. Eighty students maintained their status, rising or falling just zero to three places. Forty-eight students fell in status by four to nine places. Fifteen students fell by 10 to 19 places in the rank order.

In September 1983, more resident students were ranked in the top third of the classrooms, and more transferred students were ranked in the bottom third of the classrooms. These rankings reflect the established friendships among the resident students and the transferred groups' status as "new students." By May 1984, however, the rankings of the two groups within the classrooms had changed. The number of transferred students who ranked in the top third of the classrooms increased whereas the number of resident students ranked in the top third of the

classrooms decreased from September 1983 to May 1984 (Appendix G).

Several factors may have accounted for gains or losses in status within the consolidated group of students. Collaborating evidence from observations, interviews, journals, and academic data revealed that it took time for children to establish peer interactions within the Woodhaven classrooms. By May, however, the friendship patterns that emerged within the classrooms revealed that the transferred students had been accepted and assimilated into these microsystems.

Research on peer interactions (Glidewell, Kantor, Smith, & Stringer, 1969) has shown that such factors as teacher power, social class, physical attributes, and intellectual attributes can also contribute significantly to the development of classroom social structures. However, developing assertions concerning the effect of factors other than time on the establishment of student friendship patterns was beyond the scope of this study.

Findings From Student Journals

The development of positive interactions between transferred and resident students was documented through students' individual journals. A fourth grade and a first grade class participated in various writing activities during the 1983-84 school year. Although the classes' writings differed in scope and direction, they helped the

researcher verify the emergence of positive peer interactions.

The fourth grade classroom. Twenty four fourth graders, 8 transferred and 16 resident, were given 14 topics for independent writing in individual journals. The fourth-grade classroom teacher suggested 11 topics for journal entries, centering on the students and their school activities (Appendix H). The researcher provided three additional topics, which related to a school closing. (Appendix H). These subjects were suggested (a) to motivate students to evolve ideas to help other students involved in school closings and (b) to help the researcher assess the development of friendships and peer interactions within the classroom.

The 24 fourth graders wrote 176 entries in their journals; each student made 2 to 15 entries. In those 176 entries, students covered 429 topics, which were categorized as positive and negative non-academic topics, positive and negative academic topics, positive and negative comments mentioning transferred student resident students, positive and negative comments about siblings, and positive and negative comments about staff members (See Appendix H). Table 5.1 shows the classification of topics in the journal entries, along with the number and percentage of times each topic was mentioned.

Table 5.1

Classification of Topics Discussed in the Fourth-Grade
Journal Entries

Topic Classification	Number of Times Topics were Mentioned	Percentage of Topics
Positive nonacademic topic	166	38.7%
Positive academic topic	19	4.4%
Negative nonacademic topic	45	10.5%
Negative academic topic	10	2.3%
Positive comment about a transferred student	26	6.1%
Positive comment about a resident student	52	12.1%
Positive sibling comment	20	4.7%
Negative sibling comment	5	1.1%
Negative comment about a transferred student	16	3.7%
Negative comment about a resident student	43	10.0%
Positive teacher comment	23	5.4%
Negative teacher comment	4	0.9%
Total	429	100%

Of the fourth-grade journal entries relating to nonacademic topics 38.7 percent were positive reactions to school and 10.5 percent negative. Academic topics accounted for only 6.7 of the entries, 4.4 percent positive and 2.3 percent negative. Entries mentioning the names of classmates accounted for 31.9 percent of the topics, 18.2 percent of them positive and 13.7 percent negative.

A resident fourth grader, Jim, recorded his thoughts about his new friends in May 1984: "The school year was pretty good and I made lots of friends and most of them were new. I'm glad that they came to our school. "

Among the writings pertaining to the school transfer, several focused on the students' apprehensive feelings about the new situation. A transferred student, Carol, wrote, in November 1983: "This school year is different because I ride the bus and some of the people I don't know. "

Some resident students commented on new administrative procedures in school. In November 1983, Nicki wrote: "School is different from last year. We can eat any place in the lunch room."

The children's stories on school closings provided insights into their feelings about transferring to a new school. The most revealing emotions were evident in the stories about fictional children named Rob, Sue, Jason, and Andrea (Appendix H). Most students, especially transferred

ones, put themselves into the stories and reflected their own feelings, In April 1984, Trisha, a resident student, observed her new classmates and projected her feelings about the change in schools:

If the school that I used to go to closed, I would feel sad. But when I go to another school, I would make new friends. But the bad thing about it, I would miss my other friends. I would miss my teacher too.

In March 1984, Ryan, a transferred student, wrote about Rob which is documented in his original spelling:

Rob probely felt weird when he frist got to his new school but he met new freinds but not a lot becaus he mist the old school. But by Christmas time he had a lot of freinds but he still felt left out and was sad.

Ryan's writing typified that of other transferred students who continued to miss Evergreen School occasionally even after a year at Woodhaven.

The first grade classroom. Twenty-four first graders, 5 transferred and 19 resident pupils, dictated their journal entries to parent and student volunteers and then illustrated these stories. Topics of the journal entries concerned school-related situations, stories from literature, and school closings, as suggested by the researcher (Appendix H).

The 24 first graders wrote 109 journal entries; each pupil made two to six entries. The journal entries covered 198 topics, which were classified in the same manner as the fourth graders' writings (See Appendix H). Categories'

topics included positive and negative academic and nonacademic topics, positive and negative comments about transferred and resident students, positive and negative comments about family members, positive and negative comments about teachers, and positive and negative comments about friends. These topics are revealed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 reveals a wealth of positive comments extracted from the first graders' writings. Positive nonacademic comments accounted for 25 percent of the entries, positive academic comments accounted for 17 percent, positive comments about transferred students accounted for 13.5 percent, positive comments about resident students accounted for 20.9 percent, positive comments about teachers accounted for 8 percent, and positive comments about friends, in general, accounted for 11.5 percent.

Few of the first graders' journals contained comments about the school transfer, other than the school closing topics suggested by the researcher. The most revealing projections were discovered in the story of Rob and Sue, which the students dictated in May 1984 after almost a year at Woodhaven. Interestingly, many of the transferred and resident pupils expressed similar feelings in their stories about Rob and Sue.

Table 5.2

Classification of Topics Discussed in the First Grade
Journals

Topic Classification	Number of Times Topics were Mentioned	Percentage of Topics
Positive nonacademic topic	121	25.0%
Positive academic topic	82	17.0%
Negative nonacademic topic	4	.8%
Negative academic topic	0	0.0%
Positive comment about a transferred student	65	13.5%
Positive comment about a resident student	101	20.9%
Positive family comment	10	2.1%
Negative family comment	1	0.2%
Negative comment about a transferred student	0	0.%
Negative comment about a resident student	0	0.%
Positive teacher comment	39	8.0%
Negative teacher comment	0	0.0%
Positive comment about friends	56	11.5%
Negative comment about friends	4	0.8%
Total	483	100.%

Suzanne, a resident student who had experienced some academic difficulty and was retained in first grade, dictated the following story about Sue:

Sue felt sad. She felt sad because all of her friends are going to a different school. She felt mad because she didn't know anybody there and she didn't have any friends.

She felt happy at Christmas time. She was happy because she met new friends that she liked. She felt better because she could find her way around the school better.

Sue, a transferred first grader who appeared to have adjusted readily to the transfer, wrote:

Sue felt happy because she was going to a new school. She was sad because she would miss her other school. Her new teacher was nice and she met lots of new friends at recess.

She was happy at Christmas time. She got a lot of stars on her papers and she was good friends with the kids she had met.

Ron, a transferred first grader who had brothers in fourth and sixth grade, expressed feelings similar to those of many older students:

Rob felt sad at the beginning of the school year. He was happy to meet new friends. He was sad because his old friends weren't there. He like Evergreen School better than Woodhaven. He wanted to see his old friends.

Rob was happy at Christmas time. He was happy because he liked the parties and to celebrate them with his new friends. He likes Woodhaven better now. He still liked his old friends better than his new friends.

Jimmy, a transferred student whose teacher described as being nice, quiet, and hardworking, was one of the children who, according to the sociometric assessment,

significantly increased his classroom friendships during the year. Jimmy's story about Rob paralleled his own adjustment to Woodhaven:

Rob was a little sad at the beginning of the school. He met a lot of friends at school and played a lot. He like to read books and do the school work. He liked to listen to his teacher read books and liked to swing on the monkey bars with his new friends at recess.

Rob was happier at his new school at Christmas time and he did good work with lots of stars on his paper. He was happy.

The stories written by Jimmy and other first graders revealed the children's affinity for peer interactions on the playground. The transferred students indicated they missed their old school at the beginning of the school year, but in time, they formed friendships with new children. Their initial reactions to the new school situation evidenced a fear of the unknown which soon dissipated as they established positive interactions within the Woodhaven microsystems.

Small Group Workshops

Assertion 7: Transferred students maintained ties to the closed school, even when they had adjusted well to the new school. The older the student, the harder it was for him/her to accept the transfer.

The small-group workshops guided by the researcher during the first year of consolidation provided her opportunities to observe how the transferred students were

adjusting to the new school. The workshops met bi-monthly at lunch time. During these workshops, students ate their lunches and participated in small-group discussions. The student participants or key informants were divided into two groups: an older group of fourth and fifth graders and a younger group of first and second graders. Students selected for the workshops had been recommended by their teachers as being interested and willing to participate. All students had parental permission to join the workshop (Appendix F).

The students were informed of the time and agenda for each workshop. The sessions were planned around a language arts theme, and the students occasionally provided ideas for the activities. Because of variability in the lunch program, the scheduled workshop sessions were sometimes cancelled yet students in the older group frequently requested additional meeting times. Despite having irregular meeting times, the small-group workshops were held 15 times with the older students and 10 times with the younger students.

During the first semester, workshop sessions were devoted to discussions of Woodhaven and Woodhaven students. The older students, in particular, spent many sessions discussing former Evergreen friends and teachers and reminiscing about activities that had taken place the previous year at Evergreen. Some discussions were tape

recorded but the researcher concluded that discussions were more spontaneous when the tape recorder was not used.

All but two of the transferred key informants remained in the workshops. One fifth-grade girl, the only upper-grade minority student, moved to another school in February. Another student, Gary, a second grader, dropped out of the workshops after the second meeting. When the researcher asked him during the second session if he would like to eat with the students in the small groups, Gary replied, "No, I want to eat with my friends in the lunchroom." Both the researcher and his teacher assessed this statement to indicate Gary had accepted the school and had made friends with pupils in his classroom.

During the small group sessions, some biased conversations developed, probably because the students knew the researcher was a transferred Evergreen teacher. Although observations of the key informants elicited some important insights, it was evident that the older group of children sometimes viewed the workshops as opportunities to reminisce about Evergreen. In an attempt to gather disconfirming evidence, an important part of ethnographic research, the researcher revised the workshops to include both transferred and resident pupils during the second semester of the 1983-84 school year.

At a late January 1984 meeting, each key informant student was asked to bring a resident friend to the next

scheduled session. All of the transferred students except two fourth-grade boys chose a friend to join the workshops (see Table 2.2). Like the original key informants, the resident students were invited to write in notebooks or journals, whenever possible, as part of the language arts theme of the workshop. The combined groups of resident and transferred students met for a few sessions and then disbanded until students were interviewed in the spring.

A few days after the researcher suggested forming a combined group of students, the upper-grade transferred children who had been participating in the workshops created National Evergreen Day. Through National Evergreen Day, which is described in the following section, the transferred students provided themselves a final opportunity to remember Evergreen School.

National Evergreen Day

One morning in February, the students got off the bus and, as usual, lined up at their assigned doorways. When the fourth and fifth graders entered the building and began removing their coats, their teachers sensed excitement in the students' conversations. Ryan, a fourth grader, and Matt, a fifth grader, walked down the hallway telling their teachers, "It's a national holiday today. It's National Evergreen Day. We all wore our Evergreen T-shirts. Where is your Evergreen T-shirt, Mrs. Franks? Where are your Evergreen T-shirts, Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Scott?"

Mrs. Scott, the first grade teacher, went down the hallway to pick up her children at their assigned entryway. When the first graders entered the building, all the former Evergreen students opened their coats and jackets to reveal the familiar red and white T-shirt with the one room schoolhouse and the word Evergreen displayed brightly on the front. Mrs. Scott asked Sue and Jimmy, whose faces glowed with unusual enthusiasm, "What is going on? Why does everyone have their Evergreen T-shirt on today?"

Sue and Jimmy, both alert students who always seemed to know what was going on and where it was happening, said, "Mr. Adams told us after school to wear our T-shirts today. Matt announced it on the bus yesterday and told all of us to wear our T-shirts." Surprised, Mrs. Scott asked, "You mean the principal told you to wear your T-shirts?"

All the first graders agreed with Sue and Jimmy as they entered the classroom and began preparing for the morning activities. One former Evergreen student, Ron, did not have his T-shirt on when he sat down at his desk. Before he could turn around, though, his mother appeared at the door with Evergreen shirts for Ron and his fourth-grade brother. The boys had forgotten to wear their shirts, but had telephoned and convinced their mother to bring the shirts to school as soon as possible. When Ron put on his Evergreen shirt, his smile spread from ear to ear.

Mrs. Scott asked Ron's mother, "Who told the kids to wear their T-shirts?" Mrs. Jefferson answered, "Ron told me that you told the kids to wear their T-shirts today. I made a special trip up here so they could wear them. Didn't you tell the kids to wear their Evergreen shirts?" Mrs. Jefferson was full of smiles as she saw the astonished look on the teacher's face. Mrs. Jefferson giggled, "Those kids pulled something over on us!"

The National T-shirt Day event continued throughout the school day. During lunch period, many former Evergreen students called out to the transferred Evergreen teachers, "Look at our T-shirts!" Some of the resident students commented that the Evergreen kids were wearing their T-shirts, but other pupils said little else about the shirts as they carried on with the day's activities.

The next morning, the Evergreen students again got off the bus wearing their T-shirts. Mrs. Jackson and Mrs. Franks were also wearing Evergreen T-shirts, much to the delight of the transferred students. When Mrs. Scott, the only former Evergreen teacher not wearing a T-shirt, asked Mrs. Jackson why she was wearing her shirt, the latter replied, "The kids said the bus driver told them to wear their T-shirts. Matt announced it on the bus again, telling the kids to wear their Evergreen T-shirts." When Mrs. Scott saw Matt in the hallway she asked him, "Who told you to announce National T-shirt day on the bus?" Matt then

replied, "I think it was one of the fourth graders. Ryan, I think."

During the conversations in the small-group workshops that day, the fourth graders admitted they had started National Evergreen Day. When asked how they had conceived the idea, Suzie volunteered, "You asked us to bring a Woodhaven friend to the small groups, and we just wanted to remember Evergreen."

Mrs. Scott, who held the small-group workshops, thought her request to combine the former Evergreen students with resident Woodhaven students in the small group workshops was the reason the transferred students created National Evergreen Day. When asked to pick a resident partner, several of the older transferred students had shown resistance to the idea through facial and other overt bodily expressions. Although they did not refuse to choose a partner, they were aware that by doing so they would relinquish their special status as members of a select group who got to eat and talk with a teacher during lunch. So although transferred students chose partners to join them in the workshops, they decided to remember their former school the best way they knew how. National Evergreen Day was a way for the older students, in particular, to remember special experiences at Evergreen. In a sense, the transferred teachers, too, allowed themselves a bit of nostalgia in wearing the Evergreen T-shirts.

The activities surrounding National Evergreen Day and the mass wearing of the Evergreen T-shirts in a group situation were not repeated. It appeared that the need to be recognized as a group from the former school was a one-time occurrence. The following year, students would occasionally wear their T-shirts to school, but no significance was attached to it. Reminiscence had run its course, and the transferred students had accepted Woodhaven as their school.

Older Students: A More Difficult
Process of School Adjustment

Evergreen students were transferred to three different schools. Over the summer, they had time to assimilate the change in schools and begin to make plans for the new school year. The change affected some students more than others. The first and second graders who knew only two or three students from the former school and had not yet formed many close friendships soon made new friends within the resident student population (See Findings from Sociometry).

The adjustments of fourth and fifth graders transferring to Woodhaven were more complex. While at Evergreen, these children had formed close relationships with many fellow classmates, and these friendships often ended when the pupils moved to a new school. The fourth graders, in particular, frequently reminisced about the activities that had occurred during the final year at

Evergreen. In the small-group workshops, older students often talked about their friends attending Hudson. However, those remarks, diminished gradually during the school year, and by the end of the year, most of the older students had developed ties to the new school and had made friends with Woodhaven students.

It would be difficult to pinpoint when the older students accepted the change in schools and to ascertain why some students had more difficulty than others in accepting the new environment. In discussing children's friendships and the loss of friends, Rubin (1980) related:

An additional difficulty is that the child who moves must now become integrated into a new social setting--where, to make matters worse, "everyone acts as though they've known everyone for a long time." For children of all ages, such moves can resurrect all of the difficulties and anxieties of the first arrival into a preschool setting....Making new friends may sometimes be especially difficult for older children, since by the later childhood years cliques are likely to be well-established and difficult to penetrate. (p. 81)

The fourth and fifth graders who transferred to Woodhaven developed new friendships in similar yet individual ways. For many of the students, the beginning of the school year was especially difficult. In an interview, Jill remembered: "I thought I would never get any friends." During the first half of the school year, Jill and many of the former Evergreen students in her grade played with each other on the playground and ate together during the lunch period.

Although most of the students made friends with each other, a few did not. The sociometric questionnaires and fourth graders' journals indicated that two or three of the resident and transferred students remained isolates at the end of the school year. They had not made many friends among either the new or old students.

Another factor in the development of friendships among the older children was the effect the transferred students' arrival had on the resident students. Mrs. Cain, a resident parent, discussed this situation:

Tim would label a student as Woodhaven or Evergreen. He would come home and talk about Evergreen students. A couple of boys he came home and said he really liked right away. That was difficult because he couldn't go out to play with them after school--because of the distance. I don't see that distinction any more. Of course at the beginning of the school year you would expect to hear more. Tim would make that distinction but.....somewhere before Christmas you didn't hear it any more. I haven't heard the term Evergreen in a long time.

Another element influencing adjustment and peer interactions was the fact that the new and old students lived some distance from each other. Janet, a transferred fourth grader, described her ideas in the story of Marty, a new student who was allowed to invite a friend to stay overnight (See Appendix H). Janet wrote,

I couldn't invite some people from Woodhaven because my mother doesn't know them. I would invite Terry because she just lives down the street from me. She goes to Hudson.

During the first year of consolidation, the fourth and fifth graders had to make many adjustments. They needed to become familiar with a new school and with riding a school bus. They had to adjust to new teachers, to a new group of children, and to losing former friends. Time was an important element in the adjustment process. Also, the presence of simultaneous transfer of some classmates, as well as former teachers and the principal, seemed to help the older students in the adjustment process. In particular, the security in the beginning of having old friends and knowing former teachers and the principal, also, seemed to help the older students.

The most significant event following consolidation occurred during the middle of the first year when the older students rebelled against Woodhaven by declaring a National Evergreen Day and wearing their Evergreen T-shirts. In a spring interview, Ryan explained the students' reasons for rebelling: "Everyone said Evergreen wasn't a good school. So we wanted to let everyone know that it was a good school." After the students reaffirmed their memories of Evergreen, adjustment to Woodhaven appeared to evolve smoothly. At the end of the year, when Ryan was asked what he thought about the coming year at Woodhaven, he said, "Next year? It will be a better year because I will know them <the students> next year."

Students' Academic Performance

Assertion 8: The academic performance of transferred students did not change dramatically after they were in the new school. A statistical test revealed that no significant difference existed between transferred and resident students in terms of academic performance in the year following school merger.

The Lincoln School District used several methods of measuring reading and mathematics achievement. During the 1983-84 school year, the district implemented a districtwide reading program in which the students were evaluated according to grade level placement within a basal reading program. However, the researcher was not able to gather data on the students' growth within the reading program because the program was implemented during the first year of school consolidation and no comparable data were available on the transferred students for their final year at Evergreen.

The district also administered a citywide math competency test for pupils in the elementary grades, which measured math achievement by grade level. During the 1982-83 school year at Evergreen, this evaluative measure was being revised, so reliable and valid comparable measures of growth in math achievement were not available either.

In addition, the classroom teachers evaluated their pupils four times a year. In fall and spring, parent-teacher conferences were held to discuss the children's progress. The teachers recorded the pupils' achievement in all areas

on a checklist. Because of variations in individual teachers' assessments and differences in the checklists used in each grade, classroom-teacher evaluations were also rejected as valid indicators of achievement over a two-year period.

Another measure of math and reading achievement used in the Lincoln School District is the Stanford Achievement Test (1982), a standardized assessment measure for elementary grades. In May of each year, first through fifth graders throughout the district are given the test. For the purposes of this study, the Stanford Achievement Test appeared to be the best indicator of reading and math performance over a two-year period.

Valid Stanford Achievement Test scores for two years were available for just a limited number of the transferred students. For example, of the 77 students bused to Woodhaven in the 1983-84 school year, 46 students had attended Evergreen the previous year. Two of those children moved to other schools during the 1983-84 school year. Of the 44 transferred students, 12 were in first-grade and had not been given the Stanford Achievement Test in kindergarten, their last year at Evergreen. Thus the sample of transferred students for whom test scores were analyzed, included 6 second graders, 11 third graders, 11 fourth graders, and 5 fifth graders. Four students in third through fifth grade were in special education and were eliminated from the

sample. In the end, 30 students who transferred to Woodhaven had two years of valid Stanford Achievement Test scores.

During the 1983-84 school year, the resident students also took the Stanford Achievement Test (SAT). Two hundred eleven valid reading and math achievement scores were compiled for resident first through fifth graders.

Students' results on the Stanford Achievement Test were converted to scaled scores, which allows comparison of one grade with another grade level. Scaled scores also enable one to compute changes in performance over time.

The transferred students' Stanford Achievement Test scores were used in answering the following research question: In the first year of school consolidation, were the scores of the transferred students higher or lower than those attained at Evergreen, and second, were their scores higher or lower than those of the resident students?

The students' academic achievement was analyzed to accept or reject the hypotheses formulated for this study. The first research hypothesis stated: The 1983 and 1984 transferred students' Stanford Achievement Test reading and math scores will be significantly different from the year of change from Evergreen <1983> to Woodhaven <1984>.

The Statistical Package for Social Science was used in performing a paired t-test using the 1983 and 1984 SAT scaled scores in reading and in math for the thirty second-through fifth-grade transferred students. The significance

level was set at $\alpha = .05$. The critical value was set at -2.05 and $+2.05$ with 29 d.f. for both reading and math scores. Table 5.3 reveals the math and reading mean scores for both school years.

The computed t-value for math scores was -1.47 , which indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the transferred students' math scores between the two school years of 1983 and 1984 at the .05 significance level.

Data used in the paired t-test for the transferred students' reading scores in 1983 and 1984 are indicated in Table 5.3. The computed t-value for reading was -1.25 , which indicated there was no statistically significant difference in the transferred students' reading scores between the two years of 1983 and 1984 at the .05 significance level.

Table 5.3

Results of Statistical Tests of Woodhaven Students' Academic Performance

Students	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	T- value
<u>Grades 2-5</u>				
Transferred				
Students				
'82/83 S.A.T. reading scores	30	564.5	67.5	-1.25
'83/84 S.A.T. reading scores	30	572.7	54.6	
'82/83 S.A.T. math scores	30	606.2	45.0	-1.47
'83/84 S.A.T. math scores	30	615.5	42.7	
<u>Grades 1-5</u>				
Transferred				
Students				
'83/84 S.A.T. reading scores	41	576.5	67.0	-1.78
Resident				
Students				
'83/84 S.A.T. reading scores	210	596.6	61.9	
Transferred				
Students				
'83/84 S.A.T. math scores	41	591.5	59.5	-.02
Resident				
Students				
'83/84 S.A.T. math scores	210	591.7	56.6	

In summary, results of the paired t-test on transferred students' scores for the 1983 and 1984 school years indicated that the students' academic performance in reading and math, as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test, did not differ significantly from one year to the next. Therefore, the first hypothesis was rejected.

The second hypothesis stated: In the first year of school consolidation, 1984, transferred students' Stanford Achievement Test reading and math scores will be significantly different from those of resident students.

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences was used in performing a two-tailed t-test on the first-through fifth-grade transferred and resident students' Stanford Achievement Test reading and math scores. The significance level was set at $\alpha = .05$. The critical value was set at -1.96 and +1.96 for both reading and math scores. The students' mean reading and math mean scores used in the t-test are indicated in Table 5.3

The computed t-value for reading was -1.78, which indicated there was no statistically significant difference between transferred and resident students' reading performance at the .05 significance level.

The computed t-value for math was -.02, which indicated there was no statistically significant difference between transferred and resident students' math performance at the .05 significance level.

In summary, the results of the two-tailed t-test on the students' performance in 1984, the year of school consolidation, revealed that no statistically significant difference existed between resident and transferred students in terms of academic performance, as measured by the Stanford Achievement Test reading and math subtest. Therefore, the second hypothesis was rejected.

Summary

The simultaneous transfer of familiar school personnel gave transferred students a feeling of security in the new school. Old and new staff members, including the principal, immediately tried to help students adjust to the new school by providing a comfortable learning situation. Feelings of apprehension gradually subsided.

Extracurricular activities, such as scouting, helped solidify friendships for many transferred students and provided an additional bond to the new community. In addition, teachers planned extra activities to promote interaction among new and old students. Within the microsystems outside the classroom, students were able to make friends with other students in the relaxed playground atmosphere as compared to the more structured classroom situation.

Students in the receiving school also had to adjust to the school consolidation. New teachers and new students

were gradually assimilated into the mainstream of the Woodhaven community.

Data from the sociometric questionnaire revealed the transferred students were recognized as being less well known than resident students by the total student body in September 1983. By the following June, the transferred students had increased in popularity within the resident student population. The resident students held an advantage in friendship patterns in September 1983, but by June 1984 their overall popularity had declined, and the transferred students had been assimilated into the mainstream of Woodhaven.

The assimilation of transferred students into Woodhaven was verified through the writings in student journals. Time and teachers appeared to be important factors in helping the transferred students accept the change in schools and in providing opportunities to develop friendships within the receiving community.

The key informant workshops verified the researcher's observations of the student body. Transferred students sustained ties with Evergreen during the first months of school consolidation and resisted the assimilation process by declaring a National Evergreen Day. Although it took older students longer than the younger ones to feel that Woodhaven was "their" school, by the second year of

school merger the assimilation process appeared to be complete.

The Stanford Achievement Test reading and math subtests were used to compare the academic performance of transferred students during the last year at Evergreen with their performance the first year at Woodhaven. Results of statistical analyses indicated that no statistically significant difference existed between students' reading and math scores for one year to the next. In addition, the Stanford Achievement Test reading and math scores of the transferred students were compared to those of the resident students. A paired t-test indicated that no statistically significant difference existed between the two groups in terms of their Stanford Achievement Test reading and math scores in the first year of school consolidation.

These interrelationships describing student activities in the Woodhaven microsystems, all influenced the transferred student body's adjustments. The total student adjustments involved an interconnected set of factors which involved the micro-, meso-, and exosystems present at Woodhaven.

CHAPTER VI

THE ADJUSTMENTS OF PARENTS

Introduction: Key Assertions

Twenty-two families were transferred to Woodhaven from Evergreen in fall 1983. Each family had one or two children attending Woodhaven in classrooms of resident, transferred, or both resident and transferred teachers. With the unanticipated boundary change, some of the parents who had initially been upset about the transfer to Woodhaven were hesitantly anticipating the school merger in the fall of 1983.

To learn more about the parents' adjustments, open-ended interviews were conducted with ten transferred parents. (See Appendix C: Glossary of Schools and Interviewed Parents, Students, and Staff Members.) The parents were selected by recommendations from the principal, secretary, and staff members. The questions asked of the parents were basically the same as those posed to staff and student interviewees. (See Appendix D: Memo to Staff: Participant Observations.) In a search for disconfirming evidence, the researcher also interviewed eight resident Woodhaven parents and seven former Evergreen parents whose children were attending other receiving schools. Resident

staff members were instrumental in recommending parents to be interviewed. Parents and staff members were interviewed between February and April 1984. The interview sessions were held after initial adjustments to the new school environment had occurred but before the end of the school year.

Some interviews were conducted after school in the researcher's classroom; others were conducted in the parents' homes. Time and places of the interviews were established by the interviewee. The group of parent interviewees had children represented at all grade levels, kindergarten through fifth grade. Three of the parents were also experiencing a second school merger and had children attending Poorman Middle School for the first time.

Along with the ethnographic interviews, participant observations took place in the first and second years of school consolidation. Parents were observed primarily during Parent Teacher Association (PTA) functions and in interactions with Woodhaven faculty and students during school hours. As a result of the interviews, the following assertions can be made about the adjustments of the transferred and resident parents whose children attended Woodhaven School.

1. Resistance to the unknown is an initial reaction of many parents upon learning their children will attend a new elementary school. Change is met with doubt and caution until the strange becomes familiar.

2. Having familiar school personnel in the receiving school helped many parents develop a sense of confidence and trust in the new school.

3. For the parents, time was an important factor in the process of loosening their ties with the former school and becoming part of the new school.

4. For the families whose children were being transferred to Woodhaven, the provision of bus transportation helped dismiss many fears for their children's safety.

5. The parents valued the neighborhood school concept as very important in providing quality education for their children.

6. Some parents alluded to the issue of maintaining racial balance through busing, but this issue was not publicly criticized or directly mentioned in the school closing or consolidation.

7. Along with the students and staff, the resident parents had to adjust to the transfer of the Evergreen School community. Acceptance of the transfer was easier for some resident parents than others.

8. School communications were important in helping the transferred and resident parents adjust to the school. The Parent Teacher Association played an important role in developing positive interactions between the resident and transferred school communities.

Each of these assertions is elaborated on in the following sections.

The Strange Becomes Familiar

Assertion 1: Resistance to the unknown is an initial reaction for many parents upon learning their children will attend a new elementary school. Change is met with doubt and caution until the strange becomes familiar.

According to the school secretary, half of the Evergreen families visited Woodhaven before school started so they could become familiar with the school. One mother's resistance to Woodhaven was evident in a January 1984 interview. Mrs. Robinson commented on the school building:

For some reason, the whole building bothers me. It's just that I can't get used to the building. Maybe it was because I had more kids that went to Evergreen and I was used to the building. I knew where all the rooms were. And here (Woodhaven) you just walk around in a circle and it seems smaller, I think. Just the whole building has something that bothers me. I don't know what it is...When I walked into the gym at Evergreen, it was always clean. It just looked brighter and cleaner. Woodhaven just doesn't look right.

Mrs. Robinson strongly resisted the change in elementary schools. Her other two children had attended Evergreen throughout their elementary years. Her daughter Sarah had two years to attend Woodhaven before moving to middle school. This mother who had been very active at Evergreen, could have refused to participate at Woodhaven. She chose, however, to continue her involvement by frequently helping in her daughter's class. According to Sarah's fifth-grade teacher, Mrs. Robinson drove on every

field trip during Sarah's final two years at Woodhaven. She also helped with fund-raising activities initiated by the Parent Teacher Association and helped with the Reading Is Fundamental program. Mrs. Robinson still tended to resist Woodhaven after five months at the new school, but she continued to participate in the new school's activities. In the second year, according to Sarah's fifth grade teacher, Mrs. Robinson viewed Woodhaven more positively.

A review of observations and interviews indicated some, but not all, of the transferred parents accepted the school merger. In the fall, many parents were hesitant about their children attending a school farther away from their homes. Their children were riding a bus to a new school, requiring an entirely new set of schedules and arrangements. Mrs. Jones commented on the change in schools and transfer to Woodhaven:

I think it was harder for me. Carol didn't seem to mind it and Therese was starting Poorman Middle School and Paulette didn't care. It had to be me, it had to be. I have to worry about them missing the bus.

Another parent, Mrs. Gilbert, related her initial thoughts about the school in the fall:

My children felt they were just going to a new building with the principal, secretary, and four of the teachers following over there. They felt it was the same school in a new building actually.

For some parents like Mrs. Gilbert, the change in schools was not especially difficult. However, she strongly

opposed the school board's decision to change receiving schools. An important element in her adjustment was her role in the Parent Teacher Association. Mrs. Gilbert had been an active Parent Teacher Association member at Evergreen and accepted the Woodhaven Parent Teacher Association's request to be its new mother Vice-President. Also, as Mrs. Gilbert revealed, the change in schools was facilitated when many of the Evergreen staff members became part of the new school.

Making the strange at Woodhaven familiar was an individual process for each family. Throughout the observations and interviews, the researcher noted that each family developed different perceptions of the old and the new schools. One parent, Mrs. Page, resisted the change in schools and decided to change child-care arrangements so that her daughter could attend Riverside School, the school she had originally learned her daughter would attend. Mrs. Page would not accept the change in school boundaries and was willing to search for alternatives so her daughter could attend the school she preferred. Mrs. Page was the only parent who indicated displeasure with the former Evergreen principal, Mr. Adams. A factor that may have contributed to this feeling was that, while at Evergreen, Mrs. Page's daughter had had academic difficulties. In the final year at Evergreen, her daughter had been retained in the same grade, a decision that caused the Page family much concern.

Therefore, the Page family never made the change in receiving schools. In comparing the Gilbert and Page families, an interesting parallel emerged. The Gilberts, like the Pages, were concerned about their children's safety and strongly resisted the change to Woodhaven. They also had a daughter who was having academic difficulty. Unlike the Pages, however, the Gilberts accepted the change in receiving schools when the hazard of the children's crossing the busy four lane road was alleviated with bus transportation. As a result, the Gilberts and other families accepted Woodhaven School in time.

The Positive Effect of the School Personnel

Assertion 2: Having familiar school personnel in the receiving school helped many parents develop a sense of confidence and trust in the new school.

In the interviews, former Evergreen parents, staff members, and students agreed that the simultaneous transfer of school personnel facilitated the transfer of a portion of the Evergreen community to Woodhaven. The presence of familiar staff members to whom former Evergreen parents and students could relate was a positive factor in their adjustment to Woodhaven. One parent, Mrs. Jones, succinctly stated: "Oh, yes! It was an easier adjustment with familiar faces around." Mrs. King, another parent who was active in Evergreen's activities during the final year and who

strongly opposed the change in school boundaries to Woodhaven, stated:

I think that the biggest thing was allowing the teachers that they knew to come over with Mr. Adams and Mrs. Jacks. I think it helped them (parents) the greatest in knowing some of the teachers and familiar faces. That's the main thing that I know of. They had the program, the closing of Evergreen, and so forth, and they really got involved in it. In a way, it was a down feeling for some of them to come over here, because it drew a vivid picture of what was really going to happen. A part of their history, a part of their memories were over. But there are lots of parents that leave every year and they have the same experiences. I think it was so much more drastic, in some respects, because they talked about the closing so much. The parents were distressed about it, in a lot of respects. They would have felt a little better about it, had it gone a little easier.

Mrs. King and many other parents resisted the boundary change for a variety of reasons; however, safety was their greatest concern. The school board's decision to transfer the principal and to allow five additional staff members to transfer with him helped alleviate many of the parents' concerns about the school merger.

Parents of former Evergreen students attending other schools also commented on the positive aspect of knowing some of the school personnel. Mrs. Fisher, an Evergreen Place parent, felt all of the teachers at the new school were committed to the students even though none of the Evergreen teachers went to Evergreen Place. Another family, the Kents, said that they would have preferred that an Evergreen teacher transfer to Evergreen Place. They

explained that their son had minor difficulties adjusting to the new school and that a transferring teacher may have noticed any adjustment problems or behavior changes of transferring students.

An administrator's perception of the merits of simultaneous transfer of school personnel was related by the principal of Evergreen Place. Mr. Howe, who had 30 students transferring to his school and no Evergreen teachers, did not see a need for the simultaneous transfer of staff members. He expressed confidence in his teaching staff and indicated that the teachers at Evergreen Place had helped the transferring students become comfortable with their new school.

Another perception of the transfer of school personnel was revealed by Mrs. Carter, who assumed the role of president of the Hudson Parent Teacher Association. In discussing the new school, she stated:

We have enjoyed it. We think the children have had very good teachers this year. It was nice knowing some of the teachers and students. As far as the school itself is concerned, we have had no problems.

Another former Evergreen parent, Mrs. Fox, had three children attending Hudson. In a lengthy interview in the spring of the first year, she shared many perceptions of the school, some of which were negative. She explained that she had initially been thrilled to have her children transfer to Hudson. Mrs. Fox, a black parent, indicated that her

perceptions changed when she started to become involved in the activities at the new school. Her perceptions of Hudson centered on the white middle-class parents' acceptance of an active minority parent. Mrs. Fox felt that the receiving school community resisted the involvement of minority families in the school.

The researcher observed that two parents transferring to Hudson, Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Fox, had difficulty adjusting to their new school. Both parents noted in the interviews that they did not have anyone at the new school with whom they could talk or with whom they had established trust. Both Mrs. Carter and Mrs. Fox indicated that they were committed to helping in their children's schools and wanted the best education for their children. In follow-through observations, the researcher learned that the Carters moved out of the city. Over a period of time, and through gradual acceptance of the resident community, the Foxes developed a more positive adjustment to Hudson School.

The example of the Fox and Carter families illustrates how the search for disconfirming evidence about the ways families adjust to a new school adds to yet complicates the development of key linkages and theoretical constructs in fieldwork studies on schooling. Both the Fox and Carter families had been very happy to hear that their children would be transferring to Hudson. Yet after the school merger, the situation changed for a variety of

reasons. One reason may have been the lack of familiar school personnel with whom these parents could communicate and whom they could trust. It is also probable that many other factors were involved in these families' failure to develop interrelationships in the transitional process at Hudson.

For the families of students transferred to Woodhaven though, the attitude that seemed to prevail was described by Mrs. Foster, the mother of two girls:

I like the school. I think it has a lot to do with the fact that Mr. Adams is here and the teachers, too. Well, my kids have teachers from that school <Evergreen>. It also helped.

Time to Adjust:
The Need to Maintain Past Attachments

Assertion 3: For the parents, time was an important factor in the process of loosening their ties with the former school and developing a sense of belonging at the new school.

Dr. Holt, a Lincoln School administrator, commented in a spring 1984 interview that the parents needed time to adjust to a new school. He felt that within a year the transferred school community would adjust to the newly consolidated school. The parents who were interviewed concurred with Dr. Holt's statement. They did, however, retain many attachments to Evergreen. One parent commented in January 1984, "I wish they would have kept Evergreen open." Another parent, in talking about her daughters'

adjustments to Woodhaven, noted, "They have adjusted fine. I haven't, but they have."

The time necessary for adjusting to the new school was discussed by Mrs. Fox, whose children had been transferred to Hudson. Referring to Evergreen School, she said, "It's just like a void that has been taken. Lost at that corner. It's just not the same. I really don't feel close to Hudson. That may take longer."

Time was also important to the Kents, a family who had been transferred to Evergreen Place. Mr. Kent remarked about Evergreen Place,

I think the school is...trying on the child...We were very welcome in coming, in the activities. We were just involved at Evergreen for so long, that it was hard not to make comparisons. Evergreen is like home....Evergreen Place is like strangers.

Ties to the old school remained even after more than half of the school year had passed. In discussing her daughters' friendships, Mrs. Foster commented,

Half of their friends went the other way. It's like those three years didn't exist. They had to start over to make new friends, even with the ones that did come over. It's like moving out of a house and moving in again, but they <the students> didn't move. The school did. They didn't.

In spite of resisting Evergreen's closing, many of the parents accepted the challenge to adapt. Mrs. Jones made a statement that several other parents voiced in the interviews: "I had to accept the change."

When asked what factors had helped them adjust to the new school, many parents cited the Evergreen closing activities, such as the final program, as facilitating adjustment to Woodhaven. Some parents, though, admitted that the final program added an element of nostalgia. Mrs. Jefferson commented:

I enjoyed the program, but, for myself, it added more sentiment. I felt sad for weeks after that. I'm a sentimental person anyway. I'm very glad they did it. I think it was great. It was a fun program for them to do, but I think the adults got more out of it than the kids.

Another parent concurred with Mrs. Jefferson, saying,

The final school program helped, even though I cried. It gave me a chance to see it was real. The T-shirts helped, too. In the summer we did a lot of things together because I thought it would affect them. But it didn't seem to bother them.

In a winter interview, a Hudson parent, Mrs. Roberts, discussed the T-shirts that each Evergreen student had received during the final school program. She related that the Hudson students had just received new T-shirts, and that she was reminded of her son's first day of school at Hudson and an incident concerning the Evergreen T-shirt. She said:

The first day of school I told David I didn't think it was a good idea to wear his Evergreen T-shirt. But he likes that shirt. He loves that shirt. And it meant a lot to the kids to get that shirt.

In observations at Woodhaven during the first year, the researcher noted that ties to the old school remained in varying degrees. In the second year, though, parents made

fewer comments about Evergreen. As a final example of a tie to Evergreen, Mrs. Miller, whose daughter had just completed her elementary schooling at Woodhaven, made a special trip to the researcher's room to express her appreciation for the interest all of the teachers had displayed toward her daughter. In that conversation, she mentioned the final fifth-grade ceremonies at Woodhaven, saying, "The fifth grade program was great, but it just wasn't the same as the graduating program at Evergreen." Many of the parents accepted the transfer to Woodhaven by the end of the second year, but the memories of Evergreen remained.

Over a period of time, parents accepted the school merger but the parents did not forget the old Evergreen School. Mrs. Jefferson pointed out:

I saw in the paper that the Masons are very interested in buying the building. I guess that wouldn't bother me because they said if that group went in there, they would have service-oriented programs. I would feel really, really terrible if the building were to be destroyed. But if it's to be used in a positive way for service activities, that's fine. I would rather have it sold and in use, than sitting there empty.

For Mrs. Jefferson, as well as other parents, the Evergreen school building remained an integral part of the community and a visible source of memories.

An Element of Safety: The Provision
of Bus Transportation

Assertion 4: For the families whose children were being transferred to Woodhaven, the provision of bus transportation helped dismiss many fears for their children's safety.

The major dissension in the transfer to Woodhaven concerned the children's safety. Parents stated emphatically that it was not safe for their children to walk to school and to cross Ridgewood, a busy four lane road. (See Chapter III: the First Hearing and Second Hearing.) When it was announced that bus transportation would be provided, the dissension diminished. However, feelings of mistrust and stress about the safety issue needed time to heal. Busing was a concern for some parents. Mrs. Foster stated:

I was one of the parents that was putting up a stink about the kids having to walk it. It was not safe. I wasn't thrilled when I heard they were going to bus them, but I was upset because I live six blocks from Riverside School. I had two schools within walking distance and that very much upset me because I was under the impression that they (school board) were going to keep neighborhood schools.

Other parents viewed the bus transportation positively. Mrs. Russell commented:

My main concern was that they were saying the kids had to walk across Ridgewood Road. Once they cleared that up, it was fine. The kids were tickled pink that they were able to ride a bus because they heard Mom talking about riding a bus. And that was a big thing and they enjoy it. They are comfortable with it.

Mrs. King discussed another aspect of the merger and the busing issue. She admitted that some of the parents'

reactions may have been reflected in the attitudes of the students. She stated:

I think as parents we were very upset. We were worried. There were negative feelings that were passed over to the kids. I think that didn't help some of their feelings. When we found the kids could be bused, we didn't have to worry about their walking. Then we calmed down and that helped too. They were a little more willing to look into it.

During the final year at Evergreen, the issue of busing students to Woodhaven arose from the concern for the children's safety. The change in receiving schools generated a feeling of mistrust when parents were not initially given the option of bus transportation. When the school board finally decided to provide bus transportation, some parents were still hesitant about the transfer. For many of these parents, time was the essential factor in adjusting to busing to the new school.

The Neighborhood School Concept:
Maintaining Racial Balance

Assertion 5: The parents regarded the neighborhood school concept as very important in the provision of a quality education for their children.

Assertion 6: Some parents alluded to the issue of maintaining racial balance through busing, but this issue was not publicly criticized or mentioned during the school closing or consolidation.

At least half of the interviewed parents mentioned that they regarded the neighborhood elementary school as a positive aspect of their children's education. The parents

liked the fact that Evergreen was a naturally integrated neighborhood school within walking distance of their homes.

One parent, Mrs. Russell, related her thoughts about the transfer to Woodhaven:

The kids have to go out of what I call the neighborhood. We bought here because it was two blocks from the school and, all of a sudden, when the youngest one hits school, they are saying you have to move. It kind of hit hard, I guess, because I had always gone to one school when I was growing up. And when we moved here, we looked at the established area. First, we had the high school close and now Evergreen is closed. It hit hard. It's an adjustment again.

Another parent, Mrs. King, expressed the following feelings about the school merger;

If we had felt a little better about it <the school closing and transfer>, it might have been a lot easier. Evergreen was a neighborhood school and all of a sudden they took it away from us and we were no longer able to go there.

The change in receiving schools had been made to maintain racial balance within the school district. Many parents found it difficult to accept this change when a neighborhood school was within walking distance. One transferred parent stated in February 1984:

It still bothers me that they can't go to their own neighborhood school. That they have to be bused somewhere else when their school closed, even Riverside is still closer than Woodhaven. Riverside has empty rooms and it still bothers me, that because of racial factors, we have to go farther away; that still bothers me.

Another transferred parent commented along the same lines:

It was upsetting because we only lived six blocks from the other school and then to have them bus the kids over here just for racial balance. They could have walked to the other school.

It appeared in observations and in interviews that the parents accepted the change, especially when they felt good about how Evergreen had closed. While they did object to the ruling on racial balance that disrupted neighborhoods, they did not appear to object to mixed racial schooling. Resistance to the change subsided as the parents became familiar with the new school. Other factors that helped in creating a positive atmosphere in the new school are discussed in the following section concerning parental adjustments.

Adjustments of Resident Parents

Assertion 7: Along with the students and staff, the resident parents had to adjust to the transfer of the Evergreen School community. Acceptance of the transfer was easier for some resident parents than others.

In the first year of school consolidation, resident parents experienced the loss of a major portion of the Woodhaven educational staff and a merger with some of the former Evergreen school staff and community. The effect of the transfer on resident parents depended on their previous involvement and experience in Woodhaven activities. After months of observations at Woodhaven, the researcher gradually began to understand the social structure of the resident community. Because the researcher was also part of

the change, developing an understanding of the resident social structure involved many hours of discussions and observations with teachers and ultimately with resident parents. It is important to note that it took longer to gain the confidence of the resident community than it did the resident students' confidence. It took longer still to build a sense of trust within the resident teaching staff.

In late fall of the first year, resident staff members told the researcher that some of the resident parents were experiencing a "take over" by Evergreen parents. This evidence, which had not been observed before, required a careful search for key linkages in the adjustment process.

Resistance to change was observed in the resident parents, and time appeared to be the strongest ally in unifying the Woodhaven school community. However, in the fall of the first year, certain events were important in forming the initial perceptions of some of the resident parents. For example, a resident teacher reported in an interview that one parent who no longer wanted to be an officer in the Parent Teacher Association did not want her former position filled by a transferred parent. The resident community observed that the transferred parents, perhaps because of previous interactions with the principal, immediately became involved in the Parent Teacher

Association as well as in classroom activities. A resident teacher, Mrs. Turner, commented,

I think the Woodhaven parents still feel invaded upon. I think there is concern that there is going to be something bad happen, like when the former Woodhaven principal came in. So, the neighborhood scuttlebutt got started and since the principal is very low keyed, it came out as if the parents and the staff were taking over, rather than letting Woodhaven continue with their power.

Another resident teacher stated in a January 1984 interview:

One of the PTA positions was taken by an Evergreen parent. The Woodhaven parent didn't want the job again, but still she wasn't happy that the Evergreen parent took it. There is a lot of bitterness within Woodhaven parents...They are very proud of their school and what they have been able to accomplish, and then to have someone come in. It was like an invasion. They have been invaded upon.

One transferred parent, Mrs. King, recognized the resistance on the part of some resident parents. When she was interviewed in winter 1984, she said,

I knew the principal. No other communications were made, except that I worked the lunch program and some of those lunch aides were not too happy with the lunch program. They felt that I was too familiar. I have had that remark made to me. It is easy for me to talk and get along with people. They noted that kind of atmosphere. They said in effect, "This is my school. This isn't your school. I have been the one who has been here for five years and this is your first year. Why should you be any different." I had someone tell me that. They are very negative when my name is mentioned. Dennis Adams is real familiar with me because I have known him for several years. And they don't like that. I think they are jealous.

One transferred parent commented on the interactions and the amount of volunteering in the school by both resident and transferred parents. In the fall of the first year, Mrs. King said:

I think all parents on both sides are hesitant about coming in and volunteering, the Evergreen people, because it is a new school in a new area. It feels out of the way compared to where Evergreen was. The Woodhaven people are hesitant because they are not familiar with Dennis Adams and there is a big change between him and the other principal.

A resident parent, Mrs. Cain, concurred with Mrs. King's perspective when she said:

I don't know what could be done about it. There is just one thing that I have heard a couple of other parents say and it could be just their feelings. They felt they were the strangers coming into the school after the beginning of the year. A lot of the Evergreen parents probably felt more comfortable in coming in, since it was their principal, so to speak, and ours wasn't here. So, they felt like they were coming into a strange school rather than the other way around. There isn't anything that you could have done about that.

When Mrs. Cain was asked how she felt in the fall at the beginning of school as compared to her feelings in the winter, she commented:

There was one time that I felt that way, too. I came in and felt, "Gee this used to be my school," and it wasn't. It was just that there were more Evergreen parents working here that day. It was a temporary thing. I haven't talked to many people recently. I haven't spent much time up here.

The initially apprehensive attitude of some resident parents appeared to change over the following months as

their involvement in school-related activities increased. The Parent Teacher Association president, Mr. Drake, commented on parent involvement in early spring 1984:

There was no change to parents in the kinds of things that the parents participated in. But the change was in the way the school was run, the way the kids were treated. It was different in the respect that the kids came first. That is definitely a drastic change....There have been changes in the lunch program. A lot of people were scared until they found out the kids like it. The PTA is talking. A lot of ideas were brought forth that were never brought forth in the past, which was all for kids--one hundred percent improvement.

Mr. Drake was in a position to hear many of the comments made by resident parents. He related that in the previous year he had received many negative telephone calls from parents who were concerned about different school events and problems. He said that he noticed a change during the year of consolidation; he received very few calls from parents, and none of them were negative. One disappointment he noted, though, was the lack of parental involvement, especially from the resident community.

In an interview during winter 1984, Mr. Seller, a minority resident parent, expressed his reason for the lack of resident parent support of school events.

Well, with five children going through this school I have had some problems and currently I have no problems. The leadership is a good partnership. It is positive, real positive....Some of the parents have welcomed the change and have looked forward to a change. As a parent concerned about the quality of education here, I believe time will heal a wound.

Mr. Seller discussed his feelings about the changes in leadership that had occurred at Woodhaven and related that his current perceptions were very positive. He expressed his thoughts on the activities and events at Woodhaven:

We would like to think that we are receptive to change. When a change does occur and it is for the better, then that is progress. And I am for progress....There definitely has been a positive change. I can see the sunshine!

In sharing his thoughts, Mr. Seller also expressed the need for parents, especially minority parents, to become more involved in Woodhaven activities. He related that in the past he and other minority parents had not felt welcome to volunteer in the school. He believed this feeling was changing, and he was looking forward to participating more actively in school activities. Several times during the rest of the school year, the researcher observed Mr. Seller driving on field trips and attending final school programs. He accepted with interest and enthusiasm the opportunity to become more involved in the school.

Other resident parents, such as the Fullers, did not note any changes brought about by the transfer of the Evergreen community and school personnel. The Fullers observed that Woodhaven was a good school and they had no problems. They were pleased with their children's classes and commented that they had frequently volunteered to drive on field trips. Another resident parent, Ms. Powers, who

ended up volunteering daily at Woodhaven, expressed her thoughts about the school when she said, "I like the school a lot better this year than I did last year....Everybody is a lot more relaxed and comfortable and friendly."

For the most part, in observations of school related events, there initially appeared to be a lack of resident parent support for and interest in Woodhaven activities. For example, in October of the first year, when the first graders journeyed out of town to a zoological park, the first-grade teachers commented that it was difficult to get enough parent volunteers to help with the trip. The teachers noted that the second year, when the first graders again attended the zoological park, more than enough parents volunteered.

During the first year of school merger, both the principal and the secretary said they were making a concerted attempt to get parents, especially resident parents, to volunteer and to become involved in school related activities. As one transferred parent, Mrs. Jefferson, noted, "I made up my mind right away that I was going to go over there and mix right in, but I haven't found anybody to mix in with!" By the second year, Mrs. Jefferson did find many resident and transferred parents to work with in school events.

In a review of the resident parents' experiences in the first year, some felt a strangeness which was similar to

the experiences of the transferred parents. Again, time appeared to be an important factor in promoting increased parental involvement. Also, it was observed and substantiated in repeated interviews that the actions of the transferred principal and the active Parent Teacher Association helped increase parents' interest in participating in school events. The following section illustrates this assertion.

Positive Effects of School Communications

Assertion 8: School communications were important in helping the transferred and resident parents adjust to the school. The Parent Teacher Association played an important role in developing positive interactions between the resident and transferred school communities.

It was observed that the Woodhaven School office provided many opportunities for positive communications between the school and the community. Several factors helped develop open communication within the school community. First, the principal wrote informative newsletters that were sent home to the parents. A collection of Woodhaven documents revealed that the newsletters were circulated monthly and provided parents with necessary dates, information about upcoming events, and announcements concerning important classroom activities. Teachers reported that they encouraged students to make sure their parents read the newsletters so they could keep informed about school activities. The one difficulty with the newsletters

was that some of the parents did not read them. As Mr. Adams commented,

We have a newsletter and it goes out each month. Two weeks into the month, we have a question that is answered in the newsletter. I'm not sure about the percentage of the people reading the newsletter. I think the newsletter is read by some, but not by all.

In repeated observations in the school office, the principal discussed his frustration at the lack of parental awareness of school activities that had been announced in the newsletter. In an interview, Mr. Adams related his purpose in writing the newsletter; "I try to give as much information as I can get on anything and send it home through the newsletter." Yet, several teachers told the researcher that, during parent-teacher conferences, many parents expressed their appreciation for hearing about school events through the school newsletter. Over time, parents became used to the fact that a newsletter would be sent home at the beginning of each month and the principal's written communications became more effective.

The researcher's field notes substantiated other factors that helped in developing positive lines of communication. On numerous occasions and in many written communications, the principal announced his "open-door policy" inviting parents to telephone him or to come into the office to talk. The school secretary indicated that as the school year progressed, many parents did call or stop by the office to visit.

Observations revealed that the teaching staff initiated many extra activities within the Woodhaven exosystem and that the parents were invited to watch or participate in these events. For example, field notes revealed teachers planned numerous field trips for their classes which necessitated parent drivers and participants. The Parent Teacher Association also planned activities and fund-raising events that required the assistance of numerous parents. Activities like a pancake supper, a carnival, an ice cream social, and a school picnic were some of the events to which parents were invited. With many schoolwide events interrelating the mesosystems at Woodhaven, it was noted that the Parent Teacher Association executive board requested additional parental assistance as the school year progressed. In observing the activities of the board, it became evident that the parents in charge worked hard to promote adult involvement, to encourage more parents to become active supporters and participants in the school.

Another factor that contributed positively to school relations was the observed communications between staff members and parents. Communications between parents and teachers through telephone calls, discussions when parents came into the school for scout meetings, and visits with teachers in their classrooms or at Parent Teacher Association events were noted to help create an open line of communication between the Woodhaven staff and community. The

frequent communications that were recorded in field notes, increased during the two years of observations and appeared to result in positive interactions between staff and parents.

An important element for promoting positive school communications with the school community was observed and documented to be the Parent Teacher Association at Woodhaven School. During two years of observations, it was noted that the Parent Teacher Association was administered by a small group of interested parents who formed the Association's executive board. The board was composed of a president, father vice-president, mother vice-president, teacher vice-president, secretary, and treasurer. Board committee members included the Boy Scout representative, Girl Scout representative, membership chairperson, and Reading Is Fundamental chairperson. Another important representative at each meeting, one who was not an official board member, was Mr. Adams, the principal of Woodhaven. Because the board meetings were open, parents who were not on the board frequently attended the meetings. It was observed that the extra parents attending board meetings were often those from the former Evergreen area.

The strength of the Parent Teacher Association was observed to lie in the parental support and in the guidance of the principal. Especially in the first year, it was evident through observations that many parents supported the

Parent Teacher Association through fund-raising events but were not actively involved in the organization. In observations over the two-year period, the Parent Teacher Organization, which was guided by a small group of involved parents, helped facilitate the educational program at the school. For example, through fund-raising events, documentation revealed the Parent Teacher Association raised money to support extra classroom field trips and to buy carpeting for primary classes, playground equipment, a copy machine, a popcorn machine, a hotdog machine, and eight Apple micro-computers and software.

The researcher gained an understanding of the Parent Teacher Association's effectiveness by observing, listening, and talking to parents, staff members, and students. Throughout the two-year period under investigation, she determined that the interrelationships generated by the Parent Teacher Association formed the basis for many positive communications in the Woodhaven exosystem of students, teachers, and school community.

Summary

Parents of children moved to Woodhaven School due to the closing of Evergreen School experienced a change midstream in the receiving school to which they anticipated transferring. Because Woodhaven was located across a busy four lane city street, the former Evergreen parents resisted the change to Woodhaven for safety reasons. When they were

promised bus transportation to Woodhaven, the voiced opposition diminished.

Upon transferring to Woodhaven, former Evergreen parents were immediately impressed with the simultaneous transfer of Evergreen's former principal, secretary, and four classroom teachers. The strangeness of Woodhaven immediately began to disappear because of the presence of familiar personnel. The simultaneous transfer of respected personnel added to the provision of bus transportation, helped alleviate many parents' fears of the unknown and resistance to change.

Parents began to view Woodhaven as "their" neighborhood school over time. The bonds to the old school gradually diminished as parents met new teachers and new families, and grew accustomed to the physical layout of the school. Most of the former Evergreen parents understood the need for busing to achieve racial balance, and this was not criticized openly or suggested as a negative aspect of the school consolidation.

Resident parents also had to adjust to the transfer of a segment of a school community. These parents had to become accustomed to a new principal, new staff members, new students, and new parents. Although the resident community's acceptance was facilitated by the actions of the Parent Teacher Association, a few families resisted the transfer of

the Evergreen community. Again, resistance within the resident community appeared to lessen over time.

School communications were essential elements in helping both resident and transferred families adjust to the school consolidation. Central office communications were beneficial, as was correspondence from teachers and the Parent Teacher Association. The numerous school-sponsored events and individual classroom activities also contributed to a positive attitude within the school community.

It is important to understand that the interrelationships involved in the mesosystems at Woodhaven helped contribute to the development of a "united" school community. The factors contributing to parent adjustments were interconnected with the mesosystems involving students, staff, and the overall Woodhaven macrosystem.

CHAPTER VII

THE ADJUSTMENTS OF STAFF MEMBERS

Introduction: Key Assertions

The closing of Evergreen School required the reassignment of staff members to other schools within the Lincoln School District. Because of the length of teaching experience acquired by all but one of the Evergreen staff members, the problem of layoff or loss of jobs was not a factor in the school closing. At the end of the year, all Evergreen staff members and those from the simultaneously closing Central School were provided opportunities for a new school placement before the transfer requests of other Lincoln staff members were honored. The administration calculated anticipated student populations in receiving schools, and positions were offered to the Evergreen teachers who wished to transfer along with the Evergreen community.

As a result of transfers and movements of former Woodhaven staff within the school district, four Evergreen teachers, the principal, and the school secretary were transferred to Woodhaven. The nearly 50 percent staff change at Woodhaven necessitated adjustments by both the transferring and receiving staff members.

After analyzing the transfer of Evergreen staff members and their reception in the receiving school, the researcher developed assertions concerning staff adjustments. These assertions were based on participant observations during the closing of Evergreen and the first two years of the school merger at Woodhaven. Also, interviews with transferred staff, resident staff, administrators, and parents aided in establishing key linkages. The researcher, through careful documentation of field notes recording observations and in reviewing interviews, attempted to establish a series of objective assertions recognizing and eliminating any biases. The assertions concerning staff members' adjustment to the transfer are as follows:

1. The successful although time-consuming physical transfer of supplies and equipment between closing and receiving schools helped create a smooth school consolidation.

2. Time was a major factor in transferred staff members' adjustment to the new school. Ties to the closed school remained to varying degrees, and positive experiences during the school closing were readily remembered.

3. Staff members' acceptance of assigned grade level placements was an important factor in developing job satisfaction. Transferred teachers' adjustment was more

difficult when they were placed at a grade level that was not their preference.

4. The resistance to change was weakest in children, stronger in parents, and strongest in the teaching staff.

5. Active involvement in the educational environment facilitated the staff members' adjustment to the new school.

6. The transfer of a respected administrator with a loyal following among the transferring staff facilitated a harmonious school consolidation.

7. Following consolidation, the resident staff members adjusted to a new administrator and new staff members with varying degrees of apprehension and acceptance. The resident staff initially adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the new administrator and teachers.

8. The complex interrelationships between resident and transferred staff may be better explained in terms of group dynamics and personality factors than by the actual transfer of teachers from another school.

9. The transferred staff members developed a sense of belonging within the Woodhaven community over a period of time, but the resident staff required longer to establish a sense of trust in the new staff members.

10. The transferred school principal played an important role in developing a positive school climate.

Each of these assertions is discussed more fully in the following sections.

Transfer of Staff Members

Physical Move

Assertion 1: The successful although time-consuming physical transfer of supplies and equipment between closing and receiving schools helped create a smooth school consolidation.

It was observed that the closing of an elementary school involves a multitude of movements. The major element in such a transfer is the movement of students and staff members to a new school location. The closing of a school also necessitates the time-consuming movement of books, furniture, and other teaching supplies. Over the years, with each school closing, the Lincoln School District had developed a carefully scheduled procedure for transferring materials and furniture. The district followed a series of guidelines for vacating a school facility. Major steps in the relocation process were updating inventory, identifying receiving school needs, developing personnel relocations, preparing relocation plans for support offices, and moving instructional materials and equipment to receiving schools and other school district facilities (Lincoln document, 1982).

The process of implementing relocation activities, however, is not infallible. For example, in closing Evergreen School, it was reported in interviews with

principals that many of the textbooks and teaching materials that were offered to the receiving schools were judged to be outdated and not of practical value. Furniture and other large instructional equipment were reassigned by central school administrators and not the building principals. At the end of the school year, receiving principals indicated that they were allowed to examine materials available for transfer, but because teachers had left for summer vacation, those who were actually going to use the materials were not consulted. Some principals noted they simply had to guess the feasibility of accepting and moving many materials.

A resident kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Barnes, commented in the fall, "We were thrilled to hear part of Evergreen was transferring to Woodhaven. We thought we were going to get all sorts of goodies." For the most part, the resident staff said they were disappointed in the quantity and quality of materials transferred with the students. Mrs. Barnes was lucky though because she said the transferred principal allowed her to go over to Evergreen in the fall to see if she wanted any of the remaining kindergarten materials which he knew were still at the school.

One receiving school was not so lucky, however. Field notes revealed that Hudson School received students not only from Evergreen but also from Central School. Hudson was absorbing students from two closing schools and was also adjusting its neighborhood boundaries. The previous year, it

had only kindergarten, fifth, and sixth grades. With the boundary change and transfer of new student populations, the school was redesigned to accommodate children in kindergarten through fifth grades. Hudson, therefore, had four new grades. In a winter interview, Hudson's principal, Mr. Brown, commented:

The hardest part for me was getting the materials, and when they came in, they didn't come in as the inventories indicated. So, it left me scratching for needed materials for the teachers. The other materials did not come to the building until late. Teachers at all levels needed materials in the beginning of the school year.

Mr. Brown's major frustration concerned the lack of organization and the limited amount of time allotted for moving adequate materials, textbooks, and furniture for the teaching staff. He said the Hudson teachers spent several months at the beginning of the school year sorting, organizing, and requesting necessary teaching materials.

Staff members who were transferred to Woodhaven, where there was no major grade-level reorganization, indicated they were affected differently by the physical move to new classrooms. For example, field notes described the four transferred teachers who were in Woodhaven two weeks before school officially started, unpacking boxes and organizing their classrooms. Two of the teachers had the school district move their personal teaching supplies, and the other two moved their own materials. Mr. Harrison, a special education resource teacher, commented on the move:

I moved all my personal materials. In sending things over on the truck, there are so many things that might be lost. If the school district is going to move things, you should be assured of the move. I moved most of my personal things, but left several boxes of materials for the school district to move. After three weeks at Woodhaven, many of the other boxes that I left at Evergreen were still there. That puts teachers in an uncomfortable position.

It can be seen in a review of observations and interviews that the physical move was initially time consuming for all staff members as they prepared for the beginning of a new school year in a different building.

Time to Adjust

Assertion 2: Time was a major factor in transferred staff members' adjustment to the new school. Ties to the closed school remained to varying degrees, and positive experiences during the school closing were readily remembered.

The transferred staff indicated in conversations and interviews during the school year that the merger had been facilitated by the simultaneous move of other staff members from Evergreen School. They noted that the initial trauma of moving supplies and changing physical operating conditions was alleviated when they were able to talk and share experiences with staff members with whom they had worked before. Transferred staff members also indicated they felt a sense of comfort in having some familiar parents and students at the receiving school.

The researcher's records indicated the initial adjustments of the transferred staff members varied

according to whether the individual was the principal, the secretary, a regular education classroom teacher, or a special education teacher. The school secretary had to reorganize supplies and files in addition to starting a new school year in a different community with unfamiliar staff. Judy, the secretary, remembered her overwhelming responsibilities in the school office. She related:

I have a tremendous amount of work to do here. The job is exhausting with an overwhelming amount of work. The higher administration does not appear to understand....I am busier here and I don't have that much time. My conversations are shorter. I'm on the telephone almost all day long.

The transferred staff recognized and stated repeatedly that the secretarial position at Woodhaven involved much more work than it had at Evergreen. Stress resulting from responsibilities for coordinating teacher, student, parent, and support personnel functions showed on Judy's face, especially at the end of each day.

Mrs. Jackson, a transferred teacher, noted the effect of the transfer on both the secretary and principal when she stated,

The secretary is definitely overworked. She is working twice as hard as she did at Evergreen. It's a bigger school and she has more things to do and more responsibilities. The principal generally accepts it quite well, but he too looks, at times, a little fatigued and overworked.

The resident staff reacted differently to Judy's attitude toward her new job. In observations of discussions,

they said they could not understand why she was having such a difficult time adjusting to the position. One of the resident staff members, Miss Burns, related,

We are remembering Kim <last year's secretary> in dealing with the Woodhaven staff. The old staff is saying why is Judy having so many problems? Kim did the job of secretary with no problems.

In reviewing the situation, it was noted by the researcher that what Miss Burns, a resident teacher, failed to consider was that Judy was the secretary to a principal who also held the position of full-time science coordinator. In addition, field notes substantiated that at Evergreen, Judy had maintained many close relationships with parents, students, and staff. At Woodhaven, it was observed that she simply did not have time for many interpersonal interactions in the Woodhaven mesosystems. Judy summarized her thoughts on the position of school secretary by stating,

The job is negative, in that I can't do everything the way I want to do it. I put my priorities with people. I listen a lot. I don't have time to do things the way I like to do it. I like to be more organized. The job frustrates and tires me.

Judy said that it was impossible to continue many of the interpersonal interactions she considered important in the new environment. The work load was a primary source of concern, affecting her job satisfaction at the new school. These initial experiences caused her stress that field notes revealed did not diminish as the school year progressed.

The transferred principal stoically viewed the total move, from the closing of Evergreen to the receiving school. Mr. Adams said he felt the transfer was basically just another move, one that simply happened to coincide with the closing of Evergreen School. In reviewing the role of principal, he stated, "It's just another assignment; nothing bad about it."

The principal concurred with the frequently expressed feeling of the parents and students that the transfer of additional staff members from Evergreen was an asset. He stated,

Well, I guess it is nice to go to a new building and know that you have x number of friends and acquaintances. It was nice to know I brought about a fourth of the staff over from Evergreen.

In a review of Woodhaven documents, Mr. Adams emphasized in his first Woodhaven parent newsletter the professionalism he demanded from his staff. He wrote:

Welcome back to Woodhaven School. Many changes have occurred since last June. There have been staff changes in addition to servicing a new student population who previously attended Evergreen Elementary. Regardless of staff changes or student make up, Woodhaven will continue to strive for educational excellence, a goal set by our Superintendent, Dr. Edward Smith.

Staff and other administrators concurred that the unification of Evergreen and Woodhaven communities was a top priority for Mr. Adams. Observations during the first month of school revealed his attempts to create a unified atmosphere for the students, parents, and staff. For

example, during the first Parent Teacher Association open house, when the staff members seated themselves in front of the parents for a formal introduction, field notes documented that he explicitly stated, "Evergreen staff can't sit together." With this clue from Mr. Adams, staff members played a roulette game in mixing up the seating arrangement of resident and transferred teachers. In summary, it was observed that Mr. Adams appeared to regard the school transfer as just another aspect of a professional assignment, one in which his role was to unify two school communities and two teaching staffs.

Interviews indicated that the perceptions of the transferred teachers differed according to the individual. Tom Harrison, the resource teacher and the only male transferring with the principal, viewed the transfer positively:

Personally I feel rather good, but I am in a different position being a teacher, but not a regular education teacher. I'm not actually in the same flow of the regular education classroom.

The transfer had not produced the effects he anticipated, however, because he wanted Woodhaven to be another Evergreen. Tom remembered feelings of closeness with his former school:

We were the last staff at Evergreen. We were special. This will never be again. But we did things basically to one another and we reached out to each other in a fun kind of way. We had a good, basically good, staff.

With positive experiences behind him, Mr. Harrison was observed to set out immediately to work with resident and transferred teachers at the new school. The researcher noted that he attempted to establish a good working relationship with all staff members. The resident teachers said in discussions that they quickly grew to respect Tom as he worked with students, parents, and staff members.

In reviewing the data on the closing of Evergreen, staff members formed strong ties that were strengthened partly through the many hours they worked together to ease the adjustments of students and parents to the transfer. The activities of the closing exosystem such as field trips, school visitations, the final school program, the celebration of staff members' birthdays, and bi-weekly coffees were observed to contribute to the development of a strong bond among the Evergreen staff members.

Field notes revealed that Mrs. Jackson unofficially assumed the role of key informant among former Evergreen staff members. She was described by transferred staff members as the bonding force among the Evergreen staff who maintained contacts with all of the former staff members. It was Mrs. Jackson whom several staff members called when the husband of a transferred teacher became seriously ill. It was Mrs. Jackson whom everyone called when a former Evergreen teacher died unexpectedly during the 1983-84

school year. It was Mrs. Jackson through whom many teachers kept in touch with each other.

Transferred staff members said the ties to Evergreen School were primarily in the form of fond memories of a positive school climate. Mrs. Jackson remembered Evergreen:

Evergreen for some reason was a unique school. Nobody ever wanted to leave it after they joined the staff. In fact, people didn't leave, except for a few. Generally people who came to Evergreen stayed there unless they moved out of town, went into administration, or retired.

Mr. Harrison concurred with the stated feelings of many of the former teachers in remembering a unique school that had supportive contacts and friendships among staff members. He summed up his thoughts of Evergreen:

I think each individual at Evergreen worked together. It was hectic, but it was a good experience--especially the school program. It was a school doing something together. Each classroom worked together. It was difficult, but it was a fun, pleasant experience. I liked the way it closed. I was so busy on the program. Friendships really developed.

Michelle Franks recalled ties to Evergreen in commenting about her thoughts as she drove past the former school:

When I drive by Evergreen, I have very warm feelings and then I feel kind of gloomy. Evergreen no longer exists--that part of my life is gone and I will never be able to recapture it. Evergreen was the first school in the area and it had a rich history. Now, it no longer exists as we knew it.

Documentation in field notes revealed that telephone conversations between transferred staff members continued

regularly for the first month or so of school. The bonds between transferred staff members loosened over time, diminishing to occasional calls by the end of the school year.

Effect of Grade Level Placement
in Job Satisfaction

Assertion 3: Staff members' acceptance of assigned grade-level placements was an important factor in developing job satisfaction. Transferred teachers' adjustment was more difficult when they were placed at a grade level that was not their preference.

The grade level at which a teacher is placed may influence that teacher's emotional adjustment and feeling of satisfaction on the job. Mrs. Michelle Franks, a transferred teacher from Evergreen, had taught only two years at the closed school. During those two years, she had taught second and sixth grades, neither of which was her preferred grade level. Upon transferring to Woodhaven, she accepted a fourth-grade classroom. Her thoughts concerning Woodhaven reflected her satisfaction with teaching fourth graders.

This year I have a wonderful class. The students are simply great. This is the best class I have had in all my years teaching. I particularly enjoy teaching the fourth grade.

Mrs. Lisa Jackson who had taught at Evergreen 15 years, the last seven of them in the sixth grade, also accepted a fourth-grade classroom at Woodhaven. However, her adjustment to teaching fourth grade was not as satisfactory as was Mrs. Franks'.

The researcher began to understand the total picture of teacher grade placement as recorded in field notes during the final days at Evergreen. In late spring, Mrs. Franks and Mrs. Jackson attended a staff meeting at Woodhaven, at which all teachers indicated their grade preferences for the coming year. Mrs. Franks and Mrs. Jackson who wanted to team-teach together were among the five teachers requesting a fifth-grade placement. The meeting did not resolve the issue; the teachers merely indicated what grade they wanted to teach. After school closed for the summer, Mr. Adams was named the new principal at Woodhaven. One of his first responsibilities was to assign grade placements which included selecting only two teachers to teach fifth grade. One resident teacher accepted a position in the middle school, which left two resident teachers, who had previously taught fifth and sixth grade, and two transferred teachers, both of whom had taught sixth grade, wanting the two fifth-grade positions. No one wanted the two fourth-grade positions. It was revealed that Mrs. Franks was the first to accept a fourth grade, and she encouraged Mrs. Jackson to accept a fourth grade so they could team teach together. Mrs. Jackson actually wanted the fifth grade, but she said she realized that a major confrontation was in the making and accepted the fourth-grade position. Mrs. Jackson's journal entries at the end of the 1983 year at Evergreen reflected dissatisfaction with her decision:

It's over, it's final and there's no going back. I'm really going to Woodhaven but at least now I know there will be a lot of Evergreeners there, too. I'm going to hate fourth grade--(Still my resistance to change?) or maybe I should say I don't think I'll like fourth grade at all. I've said I'd take safety patrol again only because it will hopefully, do me some good....I guess I'm actually dreading it. It's scary to make a change especially when you really don't want to! Oh well--come what may, I'll be there trying to teach fourth grade.

Discussions with Mrs. Jackson indicated her initial reaction to teaching fourth grade did not change over the summer or during the following school year. In an interview in February of the first year at Woodhaven, she stated:

I don't like changing grade levels, changing books, changing schools. I spend a whole lot more time on preparation here than I ever did. And I don't want to do it, I guess. So I fight it and it takes longer to do it.

The lack of satisfaction in teaching fourth grade after so many years in the sixth grade made transferring very difficult for Mrs. Jackson.

The desire to teach a specific grade level was also inherent in the transfer plans of Mrs. Scott, the first-grade teacher at Evergreen. Initially, Mrs. Scott had requested a kindergarten or first-grade placement. When the transfer notice went out just before spring vacation at Evergreen, she was offered a position at Woodhaven teaching fourth grade or one at Hudson teaching kindergarten or first grade. It was noted that she was torn between going with her colleagues to Woodhaven or with the students to Hudson. Her initial decision to go to Hudson was based on grade-level

preference and also her many good experiences working with students and parents who were also transferring to Hudson. In remembering the decision which was recorded in field notes, Mrs. Scott said:

Mrs. Dalton (the Director of Elementary Education) was especially nice and considerate in letting me know my options in teaching positions. For that, I was greatly appreciative. The decision, however, was horrendous. Lisa called me every day during spring vacation trying to talk me out of going to Hudson. She tried to tell me fourth grade wouldn't be that bad!

The final closing of Evergreen left Mrs. Scott transferring to Hudson and her close friends transferring to Woodhaven. Field notes recorded one teacher, Mrs. Wright, who jokingly commented on the interactions of staff members during the final months at Evergreen. She said, "It's a good thing the three of you aren't going to Woodhaven together." It was observed that on the final day at Evergreen, Mrs. Wright was overheard saying, "Somehow I bet you three will get together." Mrs. Wright was correct because an opening at Woodhaven occurred when a half-time kindergarten teacher transferred to another school and a first-grade teacher asked to take her part time position. The maintenance of an established series of interactions during the ecological transition was important for many of the transferred Evergreen techers.

Despite the newly created opening at Woodhaven, however, it was not easy for Mrs. Scott to obtain the first-grade position after vacillating between Woodhaven and

Hudson during the last months at Evergreen. During the summer after Evergreen closed, Mrs. Scott wrote a letter to the administration and made several telephone calls requesting the position before the central administration finally honored her transfer request. She related that the previous months of indecision had resulted in additional stress. After months of not knowing to which school she would be transferred, field notes recorded that it took eight days of her summer vacation to move her teaching materials into a new classroom.

Mr. Brown, the principal at Hudson, concurred that job satisfaction is directly related to teachers' opportunity to teach at their preferred grade level. With seven resident teachers and seven transferred staff personnel, he noted in an interview that many of the teachers were placed at grade levels that were not their first or even their second preferences. Parents in the community also noticed the situation. Mrs. Carter, the Hudson Parent Teacher Association president, observed teachers' reactions to their grade placements:

I have only heard from a few teachers. I know a lot of the teachers are not in the grade level that they want to be...I'm getting the idea that teachers are still the problem, in that they are not at their desired grade level. I think it is going to take a long time (to adjust).

The anticipation of moving to a new school and the change in grade levels were factors that Mrs. Jacks, the

school secretary, said should be improved on in future school closing procedures. She stated:

I think the staff should have been more informed. The staff didn't know where they were going right away and they were very nervous about knowing where they were going. I think it makes a big difference in the staff as to what is going to happen to them. Especially in a small school where they were very close knit. They knew they were going to be pulled apart, and they knew they were going to have to make new friends and people to work with. I think they would have been happier had they known where they were going. It would have helped if each person would have been spoken to individually to make sure this move was going to be okay for them.

Through observations and interviews, it appeared that the transfer process, the ecological transition, should be facilitated for staff members when the move is within a preferred grade level. Although it is not always possible to place teachers at their preferred grade levels, comments by the Woodhaven staff bore out the importance many teachers give to teaching a particular grade.

Resistance to Change: Weakest in Children, Stronger in Parents, Strongest in Staff

Assertion 4: The resistance to change was weakest in children, stronger in parents, and strongest in the teaching staff.

The parents and staff members who were interviewed concurred in their perception that children accepted change more readily than did the parents and staff members themselves. Parents adjusted to the closing of Evergreen in varying degrees. In comparison with the students and parents, though, the teachers were observed to be the most

resistant to change and experienced the most dramatic adjustments. Mrs. Jackson affirmed this assertion:

Being the first year here, I guess adjustments are going as well as can be expected. I think the kids are adjusting better than the adults are. I think the Woodhaven staff is becoming a little more accepting than they were....I think the kids have adjusted well, better than the adults. I don't think the parents are as accepting as the kids, with a few exceptions.

Additional comments in interviews with staff members substantiated this assertion. Mrs. Woods, the reading teacher who had also worked at Evergreen two years before its closing, related, "Teachers are the hardest to adjust. It comes through clearly." In comparing the adjustments of children and adults during winter of the first year, she said:

I don't think the children are having any troubles adjusting. They are enjoying it and the parents are happy. I think the feelings of the Woodhaven parents are still tense and I think the staff is having a lot of difficulty.

Following the transfer, only a few students held on to their ties with the old school. Mr. Brown, the principal of Hudson, commented on the children's adjustment:

The students are resilient. They're understanding. There are a few that will test you out each year. Here you have a whole new building establishing parameters so it took extra time, but the children themselves are most resilient.

The researcher formulated several generalizations in developing an understanding of the complexities of staff adjustments. First, many teachers resisted change. In seeking theoretical constructs that are applicable to the

study of community adjustment, Festinger's psychological theory of cognitive dissonance appears relevant. Festinger's (1957) basic hypotheses is that:

The existence of dissonance, being psychologically uncomfortable will motivate the person to try to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance. When dissonance is present, in addition to trying to reduce it, the person will actively avoid situations and information which would likely increase dissonance. (p. 3)

Continuing, Festinger stated: "Manifestations of the operation of these pressures include behavior changes, changes in cognition, and circumspect exposure to new information and new opinions" (p. 31). The interrelationships of the transferred staff within the Woodhaven exosystem revealed resistance to the ecological transition.

It was observed that the Evergreen staff had been established in their school and appeared to be comfortable with the school climate, as well as with community interrelationships. Although some teachers welcomed the change to a certain extent, they approached the actual transfer with uncertainty. Mr. Harrison pointed out:

I think the transfer was easier because I knew some of the staff. Moving with people that I know--that, I think, helped in the adjustment. I think you are going to associate with those people that you know because that is a safe environment. I think that it all boils down very much to one's personality. If you are quiet, you aren't going to reach out--rather than if you are more open.

It took time to break the ties with the old school; likewise, teachers needed time to accept the new school. Dr. Holt, a central administrator who was regarded as an authority on school closings in Lincoln, was quoted in a 1984 newspaper report as saying, "People don't like their school closed, but generally within a brief period, the new school becomes 'their' school and there usually isn't much of a problem."

Field notes revealed the resident staff also needed time to adjust to and accept the new community--in particular, the transferred staff members. An important element in the transfer process was the resistance to change that was observed in varying degrees among the resident staff. The following sections explore the findings concerning the interrelationships that evolved in the ecological transition experienced by old and new staff members.

Staff Involvement: The First Semester

Adjustment to the transfer process varied according to the individual staff member. For teachers who had taught at Evergreen a long time, the physical move was especially time consuming and exhausting because the materials they had accumulated needed to be transferred and settled in the new school. Teachers' acceptance of a new building and a new classroom often does not occur immediately. In November of the first year, Mildred, a preschool teacher, asked Mrs.

Scott how she liked her room. When Mrs. Scott replied, "Fine," Mildred continued, "I remember changing rooms. It takes over a year to get used to a classroom until it feels like your own." Three of the transferred classroom teachers noted the feeling, in the fall of the first year, commenting, "We still aren't comfortable in our room or for that matter, in the school."

The move also had psychological repercussions that varied in degree and intensity among individual staff members. Mrs. Jackson was overheard commenting, "The Evergreen kids and staff lost their school. We had to make the change, and a big one at that." Mrs. Franks concurred:

I have a very warm feeling and then I feel kind of dark and gloomy. Evergreen no longer exists--that part of my life is gone and I will never be able to recapture it again. Evergreen was the first school in the area and it had a rich history. Now, it no longer exists as we knew it. I was only over there two years, but they were the two best years I have ever spent in my life.

Tom Harrison also remembered the anxiety about moving. He related an example of the teacher who has taught at a school for 10 to 15 years saying, "To start over again, that takes a lot!"

All of the transferred staff members were observed to evidence a need to maintain ties with the familiar and comfortable. They related the security of knowing each other, as well as many of the students and parents, upon entering Woodhaven. Other school district staff members also noted the Evergreen teachers' tendency to maintain ties with

each other. Field notes recorded an incident when a Lincoln resource teacher ran into three transferred teachers at lunch and greeted the group with the statement, "Hi, Evergreen--Just thought I would add a bit of nostalgia." The assimilation into the new school may have been strengthened at first by the interactions of transferred staff who had worked closely together in Evergreen's closing. In any case, the transferred staff members initially had a tendency to cling to the known or familiar.

Assimilation Into the Educational Community

Assertion 5: Active involvement in the educational environment facilitated the transferred staff members' adjustment to the new school.

The transferred staff were observed to immediately assume a active role in the educational process at Woodhaven. During the first few weeks of school, transferred teachers volunteered to work with the safety patrol, to chair the social committee, to assume the position of teacher vice-president of the Parent Teacher Association, and to serve on various committees. Resident staff members were observed to serve as teacher-in-charge, members of a staff advisory committee, and members of other school committees requiring teacher input.

With the active participation of both transferred and resident staff members, interactions with parents and students developed rapidly. Within several months after

consolidation, it was noted that transferred and resident parents along with the staff participated in various student related activities. In the beginning, however, not all teachers experienced positive interactions. Mrs. Jackson, who headed the safety patrol, commented,

I'm not happy with the safety patrol because I can't control it. Several parents have complained about the safeties and their responsibilities this year. I don't think it's being run as well as it should. I think the safeties enjoyed the job more so at Evergreen. Maybe next year I definitely will know who should be on the safety patrol--more so than this year.

Other activities created by both resident and transferred staff members hastened the assimilation of Evergreen teachers into the educational community. Activities undertaken by resident and transferred teachers included presenting a fourth-and fifth-grade Christmas program and participating in an environmental education program at the school district's Environmental Education Center. The principal was observed to encourage staff participation in these activities.

Through the many activities planned during the first year of consolidation, many transferred and resident parents quickly got to know the new and old staff members. Mr. Drake, a long-time Woodhaven parent, discussed the new staff and changes that he had noticed during the first year:

Well, I think the teachers planned field trips and places to go which are by far more than they have ever done before. I see things in the school going very smoothly this year.

Mr. Drake, who was also the Parent Teacher Association president, was in a position to oversee many school activities. His comments, along with those of other parents, revealed that the parents noticed the entire staff was involved in many new and different programs at Woodhaven. In summary, observations of the interactions among staff members revealed that the transferred teachers appeared to have been assimilated quickly into the educational environment, immediately undertaking an active commitment to the new school's exosystem.

A Cooperative Relationship with the
Transferred Administrator

Assertion 6: The transfer of a respected administrator with a loyal following among the transferring staff facilitated a harmonious school consolidation.

A notable advantage voiced by the transferred staff members was that they had moved to a new school with an administrator whom they knew and trusted. It was observed that the staff members' willingness to become involved in the school and to spend extra time on school activities was the direct result of having a administrator whom they respected. Tom Harrison, who shared his thoughts concerning the role of the principal and his initial adjustment to Woodhaven, stated,

Oh, I think that really does make a difference. We knew Dennis and could deal with something that is a known. I didn't have to learn how he operated. I knew where I stood with the administration. I think when you take on a group

of students, you are in control, so there is not a problem, but when the administration changes you find you are not in control. With a new administration you have to find out what the do's and don'ts are.

Along the same lines, Michelle Franks commented in a winter 1984 interview:

We knew what was expected of us. The administrator is like a mother of a family. The administrator sets the tone for the entire family....The office, and that means Judy, (the secretary) too, did not, and does not, play favorites. They do everything they can to assist. They are supportive, helpful, kind, and accepting.

For the four transferred staff members and the secretary, knowing the administrator's policies and philosophy was related in discussions to be a distinct advantage. It was observed, though, that some resident staff members reacted negatively to the mass transfer of the administrator and staff members. This reaction is discussed in the next section.

Resident Staff

Assertion 7: Following consolidation, the resident staff members adjusted to a new administrator and new staff members with varying degrees of apprehension and acceptance. The resident staff initially adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the new administrator and teachers.

As a result of the merger, resident Woodhaven staff members needed to adjust to 77 new students, their families, seven teachers, a secretary, and a principal. Accepting the

new students was probably the easiest adjustment staff members had to make. In interviewing and observing parents and staff members, the researcher noticed few difficulties between resident staff and transferred parents. Over a period of time, positive interactions between teachers and parents developed as the two groups became acquainted. For example, most of the new parents attended the scheduled parent teacher conferences, an important microsystem for parents and staff.

The resident staff related that the most pronounced and complex adjustment was adapting to the new administration. In a February interview, Ann Burns reviewed the resident teachers' feelings about adjusting to a new administrator:

I think they <the resident teachers> have made a big adjustment. They had to make an adjustment from being told what and where to move and how--which they didn't like--to almost the opposite end, where we didn't even know how to get report cards. Most of us found out that we can ask someone who worked under Dennis before--how does he work this or how does he work that--There was an adjustment period when we were saying, "My gosh, we didn't like what we had before, but is this better?" Now they know how to work the in between. It takes a little while to adjust to a new person's ways.

It was noted by the researcher that teachers with many years in education may have to experience and cope with numerous changes in administration during their teaching careers. For example, the resident Woodhaven staff members had had three different principals in seven years. In some respects the transfer of a principal from Evergreen could be

considered a normal experience for any of the Lincoln School District staff members. However, Dennis Adams's transfer to Woodhaven was unique because he brought with him 77 students, 4 teachers, and a secretary. Because of the mass movement, the adjustments required of resident staff were expressed to be more pronounced and complex than they had originally anticipated.

For some resident staff members, the adjustment was a major one; for others, it was relatively minor. The change had a major effect on Karen Turner, the school media specialist. She stated:

I was looking at myself and accepting change, but when the administration changes, you don't accept the change. It wasn't a minor change. Half the staff changed which is very unusual and the trauma, if you want to call it, that is a lot more severe with a new administrator and secretary. You have no one in the office that you can trust anymore. You get that feeling.

Even by the end of the first year, the researcher observed that Mrs. Turner had not adjusted to the new administrative policies or grown to trust the transferred staff.

The researcher also observed, during the first months of the 1983-84 school year, that the resident staff had adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the administrator and transferred staff. It took several resident staff members almost five months to develop confidence and trust in the transferred staff. In fact, it was the minority staff members who initially formed the beginnings of friendships with transferred staff members. Through their eyes, the

transferred staff began to understand some of the complexities involved in merging with the resident staff and the Woodhaven exosystem.

It was observed that some of the resident staff reacted negatively toward the new teachers. In a winter interview, one resident staff member revealed her negative thoughts regarding the transfer: "There was a real bond there <referring to the resident staff members> and then you have new teachers and new parents come in. You are being invaded."

On the other hand, some staff members viewed the change in administration positively. Mr. Daniels, a resident male teacher, noted,

Ahh, I feel this year I have done the best teaching I have ever done. And I'm not quite sure what to attribute it to, but I do know that I feel more free. I feel much more relaxed, and I attribute that to the atmosphere that is created. I think, in an atmosphere of freedom, a very conscientious individual would feel less inhibited and more open to innovation. I think I have been more innovative this year, more so than ever before.

Significantly, Mr. Daniels was a minority staff member, the only resident male, and a self-imposed isolate within the resident teaching staff.

For most of the resident staff, it was observed that the initial wait-and-see attitude continued throughout the first semester following school consolidation. During the second semester, the next phase of acceptance, resident staff members displayed mixed emotions. Field notes

indicated that at times their attitude toward the administration and transferred staff members became openly critical, and at other times, they half accepted the new faculty. Through long-term observations of staff interactions, though, it became evident that resident staff needed well over a year to accept the transferred staff and administration and into the Woodhaven exosystem.

A Conflict in the Local Teacher Association Representation

During the beginning months of school, it was difficult to ascertain whether the resident staff accepted the initial involvement of the transferred staff in school activities. One important event in the early interactions of the combined staff involved the choice of a teacher representative to the local education association. During the first few days of school, it was noted that the principal asked teachers to volunteer for unfilled positions and committee memberships. Mrs. Franks volunteered to be the school representative to the local education association. However, when resident teachers discovered that a transferred teacher, who was also a minority individual, had volunteered for the position, they demanded a ballot vote be held to elect Woodhaven's teacher representative. Observations revealed that the resident teacher who had

insisted on a ballot vote also decided to run for the position.

In a heated discussion one morning in October, Mrs. Franks consented to a ballot vote, which would be taken by the outgoing resident teacher representative. At the meeting observed by the researcher, another resident teacher decided that she too would run for representative. When the election was held, three teachers were on the ballot. In a close election, the second resident teacher received a majority of votes. Mrs. Franks lost out as representative, as did the resident teacher who had initially declared the position should not be filled by a volunteer.

The school representative issue placed the resident and transferred teachers in direct opposition to each other. After the election, although ill feelings subsided, it was noted that a strain in relations continued between transferred and resident teachers.

In observing staff interactions during the first year, the researcher could not determine whether Mrs. Franks lost the position because she had volunteered for it with the principal's encouragement, because she was a transferred teacher, or because she was a minority individual. The researcher was unable to answer this question, even after discussing the conflict with both transferred teachers and resident minority teachers.

The conflict subsided as an issue until the last week in the second year when a resident minority teacher announced she had volunteered to be the teacher representative to the local education association for the next two years. No election was held, nor was one requested by either a resident or a transferred staff member. In discussing the implications of the current issue, the transferred staff members said that acceptance of the resident volunteer proved the assertion that, in the beginning, resident staff members did not trust the transferred teachers. A minority resident teacher felt another way, however, maintaining that the first election had had racial overtones rather than one based on new versus old staff representation. In any case, the actions during the second year validated the assertion that the resident staff did not develop a complete sense of trust in the new staff members during the first few months or even the first year of school consolidation.

Perceptions of the Resident Staff

Interactions among the teaching staff following school consolidation evolved through a series of developments in the mesosystem at Woodhaven. During the initial period, the resident staff stated they adopted a "wait-and-see" attitude. This adjustment process, a "waiting to see what the other group was going to do," lasted until about Christmas vacation. During that time, a few

tense interactions were observed, such as the school-education-representative issue, staff expressed concerns about the availability of instructional materials, and the use of a new copy machine. These interactions resulted in observed divisions among resident and transferred staff members.

A review of field notes indicated that during the first four months, the staff members became acquainted with each other, in and out of the classroom situation. The second stage, from January to March, involved a different series of adjustments. Often during this period, the principal stated that his goal was "to involve both groups, including the pre-primary teachers, in all decisions." In March of the first year, he stated that he had a positive perception of the staff members' adjustment:

The adjustment of the staff was a big question in my mind in the beginning of the year. The entire school changed. A good portion of the old staff transferred to middle school, so we had almost a fifty-fifty situation in members. My concern was that both groups would polarize and not move together. I think they have just gelled together. I perceive them to be relatively happy. They serve on committees together. If I make any kind of decision, I try to include both groups, including pre-primary.

According to Mr. Adams, the staff was working effectively together on committees and, during the meetings he conducted, their interactions appeared positive.

On the other hand, resident staff members expressed some very different perceptions about adjusting to the

transferred staff. Some resident teachers openly criticized many administrative policies, the teaching styles of teachers new to the building, and how the transferred secretary ran the school office. Other resident teachers, specifically those who were isolates or minority members, appeared in discussions to be more receptive to the change in administrators and the assimilation of new staff members.

A resident teacher, Willa Mae Chapman, commented about the transitions experienced in the school during the first year of school consolidation:

I think this year things are left up to me and I am more responsible to make a decision for myself. I don't have any one following me around. I feel very comfortable with that, but others don't. They think you are supposed to be in tune with everything, all the time. But I like the present way things are done now.

Miss Barnes, a teacher who was ultimately a spokeswoman for part of the long-term resident teachers remaining at Woodhaven, frankly related her perceptions of the transition:

All the staff from Woodhaven viewed the new staff that came in, and in some ways, it was kind of neat that they all came from the same school. In other ways, it's not, because you get grouped together as a group, just as we got grouped together. We began to feel that and began to get concerned about some of the teaching....because there were two different philosophies of teaching....

As Miss Barnes indicated, resident staff members' perceptions of the new staff were highly individual; some were positive and some negative.

A few staff members communicated that they welcomed the transition in teaching staff and administration caused by the school transfer. Other staff members, those whom the researcher perceived to have long-term experience at Woodhaven, cautiously viewed the merger with a new group of staff members. As the school year progressed, it was noted that certain interactions placed a strain on staff relationships. In these interactions, the "resident group" and "transferred group" of staff members often opposed each other.

The theories of Kantor and Lehr (1979) helped the researcher understand the interactions between the two groups of teachers. When the access dimensions of time, space, and energy are interrelated with the target dimensions of affect, meaning, and, in particular, power, the ecological transition involved in the transfer process becomes meaningful. Vivid examples of the power dimension are the interactions of the staff in the latter part of the first year and in the second year of school merger, and the local education representative issue. The power dimension was also an important element in issues surrounding the copy machine and budget which are described in the following sections.

Interactions Among All Staff Members

Assertion 8: The complex interrelationships between resident and transferred staff may be better explained in terms of group dynamics and personality factors than by the actual transfer of teachers from another school.

By spring of the first year, staff members were able to reflect on the dynamics of the interactions among Woodhaven staff members in a manner that was both meaningful and pertinent to the situation. Mrs. Franks observed the staff interactions just before spring vacation and commented on them as follows:

Woodhaven in the beginning was very cliquish. Like I told you in the beginning, the feeling from the community was that the minority teachers were incompetent. It was an extra hurdle to overcome. I think we stay together because we are good friends....I think the only place to go is up. Attitude wise, thought wise, interactions wise, the only place to go is up!

Mrs. Franks, a minority teacher, was especially sensitive to the racial issue involved in the transfer. Whereas other teachers, including the researcher, did not realize the magnitude of this issue, Mrs. Franks perceived an extra need to interact successfully with the school community. Her attitude was positive, and she was anticipating an improvement in staff interactions during the remainder of the school year.

Participant observations of the Woodhaven mesosystem revealed many opportunities for total staff interactions within the first six months of school. Positive staff activities and experiences occurred, such as the school

carnival, Christmas program, staff luncheon, and several special staff get-togethers after school. All of these events were perceived by the researcher to contribute to the development of positive staff interactions.

Mrs. Woods, a staff member who had worked simultaneously at Woodhaven and Evergreen a year before the school closing and then with the merged Woodhaven staff, perceived the staff members' interactions within two different mesosystems at Evergreen and Woodhaven. In a follow-up interview, she reflected on staff interactions during the first seven months following the merger. Her perceptions of the Woodhaven group dynamics were as follows:

You are merging two groups and it is like an in-law situation. Maybe I am aware of it more than others. It takes time for positive staff and administrative interactions to evolve, especially when the previous situation was non-existent. The Woodhaven staff was very cliquish, competitive....I think it is going to be a lot better after spring vacation....I think whenever you go in and do things very differently, especially with the staff being here as long as they have been here, there is some severe adjusting to be done. I'm curious to see what the closing of the school is going to be like this year.

In discussing the merged staff members, she commented:

I think staff members have to go out of their way to be accepting. I think they have to be very careful not to be critical of decisions of other professionals. As teachers, we tend to be very critical. I think that is our way. That is where the biggest grub falls. Woodhaven had a very established way of doing things; consequently, when new people come in and they do not fit into the established way of doing things, then....

Mrs. Chapman concurred with Mrs. Woods's reflections, interjecting the following comments during the interview:

One change is that I see more of the pre-primary people this year than any other year. For every negative, there is a positive. And over all I think it can work, but I think you have to have people that learn to accept the differences--and it is very different. The school atmosphere is very different. Different, first of all, in the direction. You are dealing with a person <principal> who believes that we are professionals, that we should be self directed, and things will take care of themselves. We remember another <principal> who believed that you are professionals but you need to be directed very systematically at doing things. This is a real adjustment for people who like the direction <from a principal>.

Both Mrs. Woods and Mrs. Chapman discussed specifically the role teachers' personalities played in group interactions at Woodhaven.

The strong personalities exhibited by both resident and transferred staff members contributed to complex group dynamics within the school. Individual teaching styles and philosophies were also highly divergent. The researcher observed that some of the long-term resident staff members felt their teaching residence gave them an advantageous position within the school community. Hence, with the consolidation of the Evergreen staff, their position within the school was related in interviews and discussions to be different from the previous year.

Resident staff were observed to react cautiously to the merger with transferred staff members who had such close bonds with one another. Many old timers perceived the "ear of the office" to be at the transferred teachers' advantage. The transferred teachers, though, received a sharp administrative directive that they were now part of Woodhaven School and would receive no special treatment. In fact, a few staff members expressed in discussions that they felt the principal excluded them from certain activities because they had come to Woodhaven with him.

Different groups of staff members perceived the experiences of the total teaching staff differently. It was interesting to observe the differences in perceptions shared by staff members, depending on the situation in which they offered these views. In interviews, staff members expressed their opinions in a highly professional manner to the researcher who was one of the transferred staff. However, these communications frequently differed from the conversations overheard in hallways or in the teachers' lounge, when the staff "let their hair down," so to speak.

It is notable that, in the first year, interactions were influenced by (1) a wait-and-see attitude and gradual acceptance on the part of some, but not all, of the resident staff and (2) the development of a sense of belonging on the part of the transferred staff. Field notes revealed that as time passed, factions developed and were dissolved. Strains

in interrelationships sharpened and, then, subsided. Finally, by the end of the two-year period, friendships were established between some transferred and resident staff members. As indicated by the events that occurred the second year (discussed in the following section), the transferred staff appeared to develop a sense of belonging before the resident staff began to trust them and the administrator.

Developing a Feeling of Belonging
and a Sense of Trust: The Second Year

Assertion 9: The transferred staff members developed a sense of belonging within the Woodhaven community over a period of time, but the resident staff required longer to establish a sense of trust in the new staff members.

In the second year of school consolidation, it was noted that staff members had to make several adjustments within the educational setting. One factor was the school budget. Particular care was devoted to the budget because social studies and math books needed to be purchased for all grade levels. Because new textbooks were a major expense, the remaining school expenditures, especially for consumable instructional materials such as paper, were closely monitored.

Field notes confirmed that conflict over budgetary matters concerning consumable instructional materials had developed during the first year of consolidation. With the extra materials brought over from Evergreen, and as a result of changes in administrative procedures in the school

office, resident staff members initially were thrilled to have abundant instructional materials that had not been available to them before. In the fall, during a discussion overheard with staff members on the playground, a long-term resident first-grade teacher commented on the availability of materials: "My students are working with modeling clay. I didn't know we had clay in the building and could actually use it."

The initial availability of instructional materials, soon changed to a much different situation. Large quantities of paper, paste, and other materials had been consumed within a short period of time. Within a few months after school opened, the school secretary shared with the researcher that she informed Mr. Adams that paper and other consumable materials were rapidly being expended.

A factor that was observed to have contributed to the increased consumption of paper was the Parent Teacher Association's purchase of a copy machine. Observations of the Woodhaven Parent Teacher Association board meetings, in fall 1983, revealed that the Parent Teacher Association, with the principal's recommendation, decided that the teachers needed a copier to make good-quality reproductions of worksheets and other materials for student work. With the immediate increase in staff use of the copy machine, paper consumption was observed to increase dramatically. Soon it became apparent to the school secretary and principal in

observations of the school office that heavy use of the copier could not continue at the existing rate. In staff meetings, Mr. Adams attempted to convince the teachers that they must limit their use of the copier.

By the end of the 1983-84 school year, such a large quantity of instructional supplies was being used that the principal implemented a new policy that he expressed was the only fair way to control the instructional supplies account. Under this new policy, all staff members were allocated the same amount of money with which to order their classroom supplies for the following school year. It was observed that this policy met strong opposition by many teachers, both resident and transferred. In fact, only a few teachers did not oppose the change in policy. At the end of the school year, one resident teacher commented, "I'm really surprised at the resentment displayed by many of the teachers over the ordering of supplies. I wonder what it will be like in the fall?"

In fall of the 1984-85 school year, teachers for the most part were noted to receive without comment the materials they had ordered, and they set about the daily routine of teaching. However, conversing with their fellow staff members, resident teachers in particular were overheard to express dissatisfaction about having to order their own materials. In staff meetings, although many teachers noted with appreciation the purchase of new

textbooks, others were not placated and, at times, they were overheard voicing concerns about their individual classroom budgets. In addition, field notes indicated heavy use of the copier continued, reaching a climax when teachers were forced to stop using the machine because some staff had overused it and kept inaccurate records of the number of copies they had made.

Conflict over the consumption of paper for classroom use continued throughout the first and second year of school merger. This budget problem itself was not perceived to be related to school closing or consolidation. However, the staff members' reactions to the conflict seemed to exemplify the difficult adjustments of transferred and resident staff members working in the stressful situations of many ecological transitions.

In the first year, all of the transferred staff members, including the school secretary, indicated a willingness to accept the administrative policy related to ordering instructional materials for individual classrooms. Although they said they did not like ordering their own materials or limiting their use of the copy machine, staff members mentioned they were willing to accept the administrator's decision. Tom Harrison noted in a conversation, "I don't like it, but I can live with it. I see no other solution myself." On the other hand, a resident teacher commented several times in conversations in the

teachers' lounge, "I can't understand why we are having such problems. We never used to have them until last year."

From conversations such as these, it was apparent that many of the long-term resident staff had not yet developed a sense of trust in the administrator's decisions and did not understand the purpose of his policies. After three semesters of consolidation, the staff was apparently divided over the acceptance of administrative policies. The division was observed to occur along transferred and resident staff lines. However, several minority resident staff members who had developed a sense of trust, not only in the administration but also in the new staff members revealed they were able to cross over this dividing line.

Social Network

A social network is developed in all group situations. In studies of group interactions, the dynamics of groups have been described as a complex network with numerous variables (Bales, 1952; Bany & Johnson, 1975; Festinger, 1957; Simon, 1952).

The social network of teachers at Woodhaven School involved many intricate variables that may be described and explained in terms of a variety of interactions within the school mesosystem. To review the developments during the first year of consolidation as recorded in field notes, the Woodhaven principal, secretary, and six teachers had been reassigned to different positions within the district. The

entering staff included the Evergreen principal, the secretary, and four teachers. Three additional staff members had been reassigned to Woodhaven from other schools in the Lincoln School District. In the first year, therefore, a major reorganization of the Woodhaven staff took place.

It was noted that in the second year, two dominant staff members left Woodhaven. The former Evergreen school secretary, who had bemoaned repeatedly the long distance she had to drive to Woodhaven and the tremendous work load, transferred to a school nearer her home. Also, a resident media specialist, who openly championed the previous administrator's policies over those of the transferred principal, moved out of the city. Among the pre-primary staff, one teacher was granted a maternity leave and another teacher died, one who was new to Woodhaven. In addition, a half-time resident kindergarten teacher who wanted only an afternoon position was reassigned to another school. In the second year, three new pre-primary teachers joined the Woodhaven staff along with a new school secretary and a media specialist. Therefore, a fairly large turnover in school personnel occurred the second year of consolidation.

It was observed that what remained was a core of resident teachers who had been colleagues and friends through the years at Woodhaven, and a group of transferred teachers who had also been friends and colleagues for years. During the three semesters, group structures solidified and

were diversified as a result of observed interactions in and out of school. In comparing the staff composition at the beginning of the 1983-84 school year with that of the second semester of the 1984-85 school year, it was apparent to the researcher that the initial group of resident and transferred teachers had changed. Two minority resident teachers developed a close working relationship with the upper-grade transferred teachers. They also interacted with each other before and after school. The pre-primary unit, partly because of its physical isolation from the rest of the school, remained together as a relatively separate entity. Also, a few teachers, both old and new, remained independent and detached from the mainstream of the teaching staff.

The long-term resident staff decreased in number but they communicated in discussions that they maintained contact with former Woodhaven staff members. With new staff members joining the Woodhaven staff in the second year, frequent interactions were observed among all staff members. Yet, the division remained between long-term resident and transferred staff members. Field notes detailed several explanations that could describe this division.

After working in the same school for a year, both resident and transferred upper-grade teachers decided to team together in various teaching situations. They presented programs together, and friendships grew out of mutual

interests. On the other hand, many of the long-term resident teachers taught the lower elementary grades and had more individual teaching styles. It was noted that outside the classroom, friendships had grown over the years, and teachers maintained bonds with each other and also with several staff members who had left the building.

A district curriculum consultant noted the distinction in staff relationships at Woodhaven in the fall of the second year of school merger. The Woodhaven principal, (Dennis) consulted George Hansen in an attempt to coordinate the primary math program in the building. When several questions arose, both Dennis and a resident teacher called Mr. Hansen. When Mrs. Scott, whom the principal had asked to coordinate materials for the primary math program, also called Mr. Hansen, he told her his perceptions of the situation. The discussion of the coordination of the math program was recorded in field notes. Dennis said, "Well, you know, you and Dennis are strangers to Woodhaven. The rest of the primary staff has been there a long time." This conversation took place in October of the second year of consolidation and somewhat surprised Mrs. Scott. She replied, "Gosh, I don't feel that we are strangers to this building anymore. Last year we were, but now Woodhaven is our school, too. I don't feel like a stranger now, but perhaps others still see us that way." Several months after the conversation, the math program was undergoing further

evaluation. At that time, Mrs. Scott and the other former Evergreen staff agreed in an after school discussion that they no longer felt that they were strangers in the building. By the second semester of the second year, they were not sure why a portion of the long-term resident staff still considered them intruders.

In an after-school conversation the second semester of the second year, several former Evergreen teachers were asked, "Who are the insiders and who were the outsiders at Woodhaven?" The answers were mixed and indicated an unsureness on the part of the staff as to their position within the school. An example of the concept of insiders and outsiders is given in The Cocktail Waitress (Spradley & Mann, 1975), an ethnography of the social interactions that evolve within a bar environment. Relationships described in that study were similar to those observed after the transfer of a group of educators in a school situation. The researcher learned from the minority resident teachers that many of the long-term teachers felt the principal had brought his old staff with him and therefore they could talk more freely with him than they could. On the other hand, several former Evergreen teachers thought that they were not treated preferentially; in fact, they frequently felt just the opposite in dealing with the principal.

In fall of the second year, a resident staff member related her reaction to the merger with the Evergreen staff

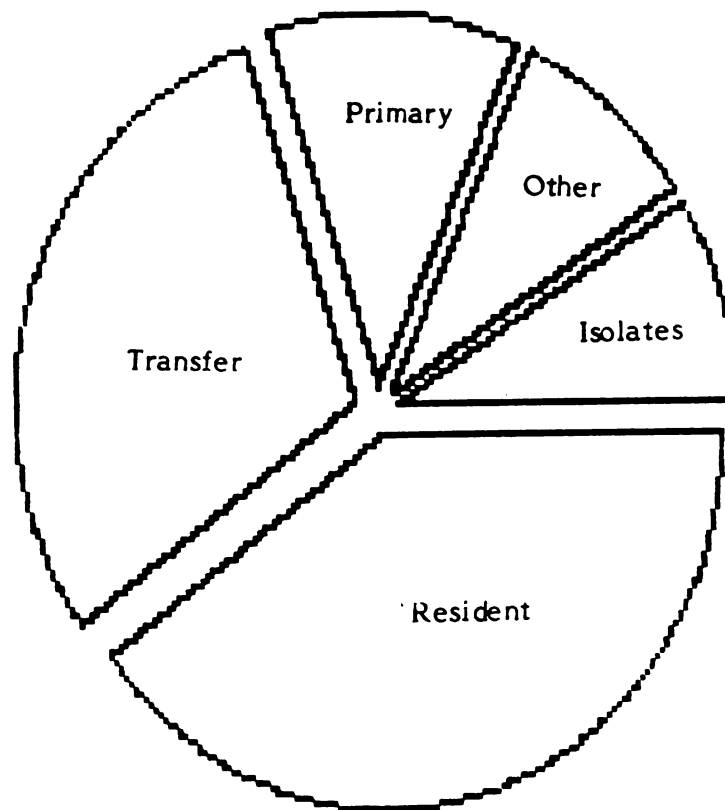
to the new secretary, Jennifer. She told Jennifer that "They came right in and took over." Jennifer shared this comment with the transferred staff members six months into the school year, when she felt more comfortable in her interactions with all of the staff members. It was interesting that at least one resident teacher held this opinion in spite of Mr. Adams's attempts to unify the old and new staff members.

In interviews with the researcher, Mr. Adams told her that he had attempted to avoid a feeling of "take over" among the resident staff. In fact, he emphasized repeatedly that his goal was to create a united Woodhaven staff. Field notes documented this special point during the final staff meeting of the 1983-84 school year. Mr. Adams said:

Next year, we need, as a staff, to work on unifying our curricular programs. Activities and events need to be coordinated especially within grade levels. That is a task I hope the staff will work to create next year.

In reviewing the question "Who were the outsiders and insiders?" one point became clear to the researcher after three semesters: no obvious distinction existed about which group, if either, constituted the insiders or outsiders. Figure 7.1, Social Network of Woodhaven Staff: September 1983, shows that initially many staff members were strangers to each other. The resident staff members knew each other and how they worked together at Woodhaven. The new staff members, having been forced to leave their former

school, set about establishing themselves in a new educational environment. Many of the transferred and resident staff members were observed to resist change, resist teaching new grade levels, resist changing schools, resist a new administration, and resist the intrusion of almost 50 percent new staff members in the school. It was observed that it took time for these changes to be absorbed and diffused throughout the educational organization, physical environment, and social network. In the process of educating the students, situations involving students, parents, and staff members developed, conflicts arose, compromises were reached, and the social network coalesced. The interrelationships of the participants in the Woodhaven exosystem were interconnected in a complex set of ecological transitions.



Key: Number of staff members

Primary: 2 resident teachers and 1 transferred from within the school district
Isolates: 2 isolates from resident staff
Other: 2 transferred teachers from within the school district
Resident: 9 resident teachers
Transfer: 4 teachers from Evergreen, 1 principal, 2 secretaries

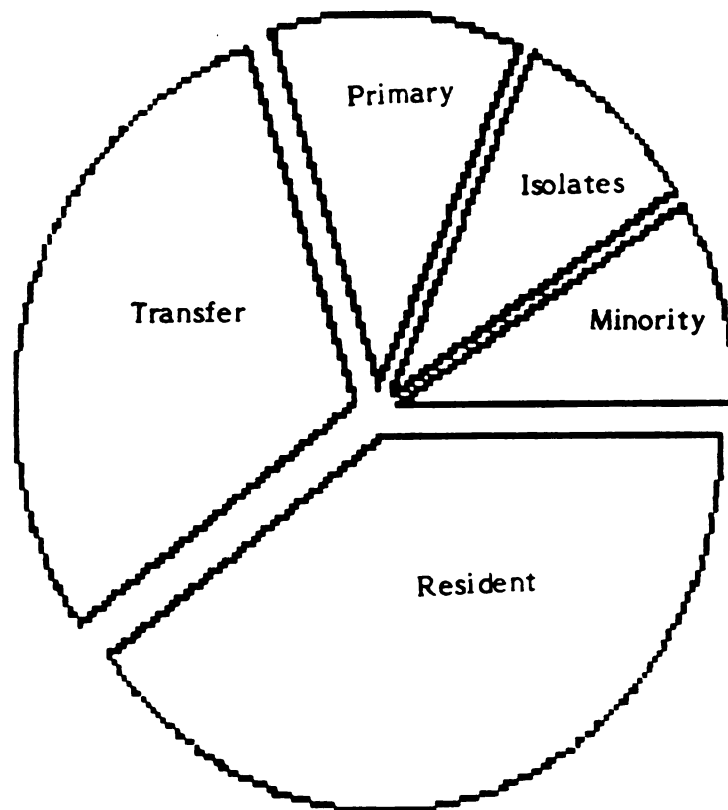
*Limited interactions between groups

Figure 7.1

Social Network of Woodhaven Staff: September 1983

The adjustment process was observed to continue throughout the second year. As Figure 7.2, Social Network of Woodhaven Staff: January 1984, indicates, by January of the second year many of the transferred and resident teachers had begun to interact with one another. Also the number of resident staff members who interacted closely with each other decreased during the second year.

Field notes indicated time appeared to be the central factor in staff adjustments. Transferred staff members appeared to have established a sense of belonging by the middle of the second school year at Woodhaven. One school year was sufficient for some resident staff members to develop a feeling of trust in the new staff members and the administrator. For others, however, a year was not sufficient. Observations revealed some of the long-term resident staff members continued to question the administrative policies, but many of them admitted they had also challenged the previous administrator's policies. In a final discussion on staff adjustments, the transferred principal's perceptions of the school climate are reviewed in the section which follows.



Key: Number of staff members

Primary: 4 pre-primary teachers: 3 hired at the beginning of the year
 Isolates: 3 teachers: 2 transferred from another school, 1 resident
 Resident: 6 resident teachers, 1 returning staff member
 Transfer: 6 former Evergreen staff members
 Minority: 2 resident minority teachers

*Frequent interactions between transferred and minority staff members

Figure 7.2

Social Network of Woodhaven Staff: January 1985

School Climate

Assertion 10: The transferred school principal played an important role in developing a positive school climate.

The macrosystem upon which the Woodhaven exosystem operated included a complex series of interrelationships among the students, parents, teaching and support staff, principal, secretary, the neighborhood community, the political framework of the total school district, and the cultural elements surrounding the educational community. The Woodhaven exosystem involved the interrelationships in settings that do not involve participants in an active role. The individual, though, is affected by events which occur in the setting containing the developing person. A primary developing person in the Woodhaven exosystem who served as a mediator and role model for the Woodhaven settings, the mesosystems, was the principal of the school. In interviews and observations, school participants viewed the principal as an important element in the establishment of the school climate.

In the follow-up interviews at the end of the first year, the researcher tested observations and began to formulate and substantiate assertions related to the Woodhaven exosystem. The principal and secretary revealed important elements that worked to establish the Woodhaven exosystem and specifically a positive school climate.

Mrs. Jacks described the positive responses of the parents and students: "I think the atmosphere at Woodhaven is good. The kids are well disciplined. The parents are happy. The teachers are getting there."

In an end-of-the-year interview, responding to questions about his first year at Woodhaven, the principal reflected on his goals for the year. He indicated his primary desire had been to unify the staff and to involve them in pertinent decisions. His year-long goal of school unification was documented repeatedly in written school communications and in Parent Teacher Association executive board meetings. He ensured in all staff interactions that faculty activities include both old and new staff members. The school secretary shared that he also communicated with parents on the telephone and interacted with parents and students at school events.

Through the many Parent Teacher Association functions and fund raisers, Mr. Adams was observed in this task of assimilating the staff and community into the school. Woodhaven activities involved a schoolwide computer program and an innovative schoolwide math program, in which he involved pre-primary through fifth-grade teachers and support personnel. His concern for creating quality programs was observed to be limited only by the time demanded by his additional role as district science coordinator. The researcher observed that this dual role initially created a

problem for the resident staff; however, they gradually learned to adjust to Mr. Adams's limited availability and to rely on their own professional capabilities.

By the end of the first year, parents and students appeared to have been assimilated into the school community.

Mr. Adams related:

Nobody wants to lose their neighborhood school. Everyone wants it to be someone else's school. If you reduce the student population by two schools, then two schools have to go. The administration needs to look at what schools are the most difficult to keep up and to maintain. They need to look at factors such as age and the demographic studies. Is the population reducing? Then, you look at all these factors to see which school should go. Once you make a decision, you follow through with it.

Mr. Adams commented on the positive effects of the move for the parents and students:

I think the whole move was positive, nothing negative. But before I arrived <at Woodhaven> they didn't want it to be "our" school. There was a little bit of friction in having the kids walk to school, but once bus transportation was provided, that evaporated. I haven't had anyone come up to me to say I wish we had not come. They seem to be happy, supportive parents. They are more active at Woodhaven....The parents have helped with fund raisers at Woodhaven without even trying hard....I see no problem with the kids either.

Another element that was mentioned by parents and faculty as important in establishing a positive school climate for the transferred community was the transfer of a number of Evergreen personnel. Mr. Adams summarized his feelings on this topic:

I think they <the kids> had to make new friends at their own pace. I think when the kids came over, they found familiar teachers, the secretary, and the principal from the old school. I think that eased the adjustment very much. I think it was very important to make the new parents feel at ease with the secretary in the building. I think if they didn't know anybody, the transfer would have been more traumatic, possibly, but it is difficult to say. Children adjust; children adjust far quicker than adults do.

Mr. Adams commented on the resident staff's acceptance of his administration:

I don't know, some days things seem to be up and other days things seem to be down. On some days, they question everything you seem to do and other times, they seem to be very happy with what you do. But that doesn't matter to me, because I know where I am going....

According to Mr. Adams, time had been the single most important factor in improving staff interactions. He said:

Now, the teachers are more of a single unit rather than in factions. They seem to mix in the lounge with more of a school spirit. There is more acceptance with the passing of time. There needs to be time for acceptance, time to make new friends, time for friendships in developing....I think the longer it goes, the more it will gel together.

Participant observations and interviews bore out Mr. Adam's perceptions. In the two years of fieldwork research at Woodhaven, certain factors either coalesced or split the staff members. However, the underlying goal of unification for the purpose of educating the students was repeatedly observed to be the primary aim of the administrator and faculty.

Summary

For staff members transferring to a new school, the physical transfer of supplies and equipment was time consuming and often frustrating. Another initial adjustment required of staff members was preparing for a new school year in a strange school with a new group of parents, students, and colleagues. A factor that facilitated adjustment was the simultaneous transfer of familiar staff members, students, and parents. The concurrent transfer of a popular principal also facilitated the staff transfer process. Satisfaction with teaching at a preferred grade level contributed to a smooth transfer.

Staff members' resistance to change diminished gradually over time. The bonds between former staff members also diminished gradually, but the transferred staff had pleasant memories of Evergreen School. In comparing the three subgroups of the transferred community, staff members resisted the change most strongly, followed by parents and then students.

During the transfer process, the resident teaching staff initially assumed a wait-and-see attitude toward the transferred personnel and, in particular, the transferred principal. Resident staff members also evidenced a resistance to change and fear of the unknown in adjusting to new administrative policies and in seeing transferred staff become involved in the new school. It took them longer to

accept the new staff than it did for transferred members to develop a sense of belonging to the new school. During the final months of the second year of school consolidation, resident staff were still learning to trust, and transferred staff were gaining a sense of belonging to Woodhaven School.

Staff adjustments to the school consolidation cannot be explained entirely in light of the transfer process. Personality factors and group dynamics also appeared to influence adjustments that took place within the two groups. While many interactions contributed to the ecological transitions at Woodhaven School, the principal appeared to be a primary contributor to a positive school climate.

CHAPTER VIII

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Since the 1970s, declining student enrollments and fiscal retrenchment have affected the political processes within education. School officials have responded to the issue of declining enrollments and the need for fiscal responsibility by closing schools (Boyd, 1979; Zerchykow, 1982). Retrenchment has affected school communities to varying degrees, and has been met with both acceptance and protest (Berger, 1982). The educational literature is replete with publications advising school officials how best to close a school (Crabtree, 1982, Kelley, 1982). Yet much of the literature is not based on empirical research (Berger, 1982; Cibulka, 1982). Also absent from the published writings is research on the effects of a school closing on students (Bussard, 1979; Cuban, 1979; Thomas, 1982; Zerchykow, 1982).

This researcher studied a school community that experienced a school closure to determine the adjustments required of students, parents, and staff members in the new school community. Conducting an ethnographic study appeared to be the best method for answering the question: What

adjustments must a school community make in consolidation with a new school after a school closure?

Readings on ethnographies of schools (Erickson, 1984; Ogbu, 1981) helped in formulating the inquiry process. Related writings by Kantor and Lehr (1975), Spradley and Mann (1975), and Bronfenbrenner (1979) assisted in the establishing the conceptual framework for the study and in stating theoretical assertions resulting from the two and one-half year study. Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework was particularly well-suited to describing the school setting and the experiences of the students, parents, and staff members, and to relating their experiences to a total ecological environment.

The Closing of an Elementary School

Closing Evergreen School was a complex, yet relatively successful process. In terms of community protest, a phenomenon that has plagued many urban, rural, and suburban school systems (Berger, 1982; Zerchykow, 1982), the closing of Evergreen School in the Lincoln School District occurred smoothly, without the outcry some school systems throughout the United States have experienced.

The events leading to the closing of Evergreen School were studied during the final six months of school at Evergreen. An ethnographic study was undertaken, using participant observations and interviews as the primary

avenues to study the effects of the Evergreen closing on students, parents, and staff members.

From among the schools to which Evergreen students were assigned, the researcher decided to study Woodhaven School primarily because the parents reacted so negatively to the change. Another reason for studying Woodhaven was that six Evergreen staff members also transferred to the new school. Also contributing to the decision to study the consolidation of Woodhaven and Evergreen school communities was the relatively large number of students moving to the new school, 57 in all.

In the final six months at Evergreen, the students participated in many closing activities such as special field trips, camping experiences, a final pageant, and visits to the receiving schools. Few negative reactions were observed among the students either within the classrooms or during special events. A reoccurring comment about the students, made by both parents and staff members, was: "The school closing hasn't hit them <the students> yet."

The one negative occurrence in the closing process was the decision to change the school assignment for one of the four geographical locations in the Evergreen community. Because the parents expressed great concern for the safety of students walking across a busy four-lane city street to the new school, the central school administration, concurring with the city's traffic commission, decided to

provide bus transportation to Woodhaven, the receiving elementary school. The provision of bus transportation for those students appeared to placate their parents.

In the final analysis, the transfer from Evergreen was more difficult for the staff members than it was for parents or students. During the final year, the staff planned unique events not only for the students and parents, but also for themselves. Special breakfasts and staff birthday parties were among the activities that helped unify staff members intent on "closing the school with class."

A Transition in Schools

The receiving Woodhaven School community was similar to the transferring Evergreen community in some ways and different in others. Both communities were accustomed to and accepted the neighborhood-school concept. The socioeconomic level of both communities was lower and middle class. Both schools had teachers who were committed to their schools, and the majority of teachers had served at their schools for more than ten years. The one basic difference between the two schools, which precipitated transfer of students to Woodhaven, was that most of the 50 Evergreen families were white, whereas more than 50 percent of the Woodhaven families were black. However, the transfer of the Evergreen students to Woodhaven had few racial overtones.

Fifty seven former Evergreen students were bused to Woodhaven along with 5 pupils who had moved into the area

and 15 newly enrolled kindergarteners. The former Evergreen student population was smaller than that of Woodhaven; 435 students attended Woodhaven compared to 289 at Evergreen. The four teachers, secretary, and principal who transferred from Evergreen to Woodhaven joined four other transferred teachers and 14 resident staff members. The 20 Woodhaven staff members were complemented by more than 50 additional support staff from the school district and a nearby university who visited the school at various times.

The adjustments of students transferred to Woodhaven were studied through participant observations, primarily during the last year at Evergreen and the first year at Woodhaven. In the first year of consolidation, small-group workshops of 20, first grade through fifth grade key informant students verified key linkages developed through the observations. Also, interviews with students who participated in the workshops were conducted in May of the first year of school consolidation.

In addition to the observations and interviews of key informant students, a sociometric questionnaire was administered to the consolidated group of first through fifth graders in September 1983 and May 1984 to ascertain peer interactions and friendship patterns. Reflections on adjustments to the school were gathered from journals kept by two classrooms of first-and fourth-grade students. Also, the academic growth of the transferred and resident students

was measured using data from the Stanford Achievement Test administered in 1983 and 1984.

Insights into adjustments of transferred and resident parents were gained primarily through interviews conducted during the final year at Evergreen and at Woodhaven during the first year of school consolidation. Findings from parent interviews were corroborated through observations of parents and their interrelationships with the students and staff members. School documents were gathered to assess the effects of written communications received by parents.

The researcher observed staff members' adjustment to the transfer for six months at Evergreen and for two years at Woodhaven. She interviewed all transferred staff members, including the principal. Informal communications between transferred and resident staff members were examined within different microsystems and mesosystems during the two and one-half years of the study.

Five resident staff members were interviewed, as were four additional administrators at schools receiving other transferred students and teachers. The interrelationships between old and new staff members were observed in group interactions and through formal and informal communications within the school community. Interactions with transferred and resident students and parents provided corroborating evidence that was used in

developing assertions concerning staff members' adjustments. Examining interrelationships among participants in microsystems and mesosystems at Evergreen and Woodhaven helped the researcher understand the community's adjustment to a school closure in an urban school system.

Conclusions

The School Closing

The Evergreen School community's transfer to a new school was facilitated by the closing procedures administrators and teachers implemented during the final year at Evergreen. Students participated in numerous activities that ensured positive memories of their school. Pupils were so involved in extracurricular events and closing activities that they had little time for regret or nostalgia.

Staff members helped develop positive activities with the students so that Evergreen would be remembered as an important part of the Lincoln School District history. The Evergreen exosystem gave members of the school community opportunities to reminisce about their school and its heritage yet anticipate novel experiences at the new schools.

Many parents viewed the final school program nostalgically and with a sense of sorrow. Some parents who had participated actively in classrooms felt a strong sense of loss. Other parents viewed the transfer more positively

because there would be a concurrent transfer of known and respected school personnel. Resistance to change was diminished through visits to the receiving schools. Evergreen parents were encouraged to become active on the receiving schools' Parent Teacher Association executive boards, and this also facilitated the ecological transition.

Some Evergreen staff members had difficulty adjusting to the final school closing. Their commitment to closing the school harmoniously for the parents and students engendered close friendships among the staff members. Many teachers had a long-term commitment to Evergreen, and the closing was more difficult for them than for others. Deciding about transfer requests to specific receiving schools, severing relationships with the community, and changing grade levels caused some apprehension among the teaching staff. Although staff members' actions made Evergreen's closure easier for the parents and students, it was the staff members who resisted change most strongly and felt the greatest sense of loss in the transfer process.

In any school closing, the events that precipitate closure and the activities surrounding the actual closing affect the adjustments of the combined school community at a new school. In analyzing the factors that contributed to the school community's adjustment to the closing, it was important to determine what elements positively and

negatively affected the ecological transition in schools for the students, parents, and staff members.

A Review of Outcomes

The assertions developed from the triangulation of data gathered at the receiving school were discussed in chapters describing the adjustments of the students, parents, and staff members. In reality, the interrelationships formed an exosystem of interactions among the school community of resident and transferred staff, students, and parents. It is important to note that most of the assertions concerning each group were cross dimensional and to some extent were true of all three groups of transferred school members within the micro-and meso-systems of the consolidated elementary school.

Time was an important factor in establishing the interrelationships involved in the ecological transition. Students, parents, and staff members needed time to accept the new school as their own and gradually to break their ties with the closed school. How the transferred community adjusted to the new school community over a period of time was the primary focus of this ethnographic research.

In the beginning, the relocated school community evidenced immediate need to relate to the familiar. The students, parents, and staff members expressed the security they felt in seeing familiar faces at the new school. The

fear of change was diminished by the presence of those members of the former school.

For the entire transferred community, the opportunity to reminisce about their experiences in the old school appeared to be therapeutic. The transitional process was eased through such supportive events as the final school program and the special closing activities. The students were especially proud of the commemorative T-shirts they received during their final days at Evergreen. Over time, the transferred community formed attachments to the new school, and their bonds with the former school dissolved.

The process of breaking ties with the old school and establishing bonds with the new school was facilitated by the immediate involvement of students, parents, and staff members in the consolidated school. The staff and principal planned many activities for the students and themselves which guaranteed participation in events at the consolidated school. Transferred parents were encouraged to participate in events planned by the Parent Teacher Association which helped initiate their involvement in the new school.

The transition to the new school appeared to be easiest for the students. Though observations and other indices of adjustment, the researcher noted that students easily formed attachments to the new school. The younger students appeared to break their ties with the former school before the older students did.

Students' academic progress did not appear to change appreciably after consolidation. Transferred students' math and reading scores did not change after the school transfer. In interviews and observations, parents had more positive than negative reactions to the educational program at the new school.

For the most part, parents accepted the change in elementary school transfer after busing had been provided and familiar staff members had also been transferred. Most parents interacted satisfactorily with the staff at Woodhaven and expressed confidence in their children's educators.

The provision of bus transportation was viewed differently by the various school groups. The transferred students viewed busing as merely a different mode of getting to school and were most concerned with the personality of the bus driver. The parents for the most part were satisfied with the school district's decision to bus their children. The primarily white transferred parents did not make public any references to racial issues, even though their children were being bused to a mainly minority school to balance the school's ethnic ratio. The staff members were concerned primarily with the logistics of one group in the classroom riding a bus and another group walking to and from school.

Within the exosystem of the consolidated elementary school, social interactions developed on several different

levels. Interactions among students developed within the microsystem of the classroom. In the beginning, transferred students had few friends, but by the end of the school year they had been assimilated into the mainstream of the student body and had established friendships. Some resident students had reservations about accepting the new students; others accepted the transferred students without question. The microsystems outside the classroom--the lunchroom, the playground, and the after-school scouting program--provided students many additional opportunities to interact with other students and form new friendships.

In the beginning, the transferred parents exhibited some reservations and insecurities about the new school. However, such reservations were minimized by the presence of the transferred principal who had established a positive line of communication with parents and with staff members from the closed school. Whereas some resident parents resisted including a new set of families and involving them immediately in the school, other families considered the transferred parents a welcome addition to the school community. The Parent Teacher Association helped bridge the gap between the two communities. Also, frequent communications from the school helped parents stay informed about their children's activities and academic progress.

The staff members appeared to experience the greatest difficulty in adjusting to the new educational

environment. Reasons for resistance appeared to vary with the individual. Some teachers had had difficulty adjusting because they had been at Evergreen a long time, had positive ties to the old school, had been satisfied teaching a particular grade, had an increased work load at the new school, and/or were not yet accepted by the resident staff.

The staff interactions were the most complex and showed the most resistance to change. The simultaneous move of a principal and fellow staff members from the previous school facilitated the adjustments of the transferred staff. The physical move was especially demanding for experienced teachers with many personal teaching supplies. Also, grade placement had a great deal to do with job satisfaction at the new school. Transferred staff members experienced stress in attempting to teach effectively while adjusting to a new school, new staff members, and new grade-level placements.

Resident staff reacted to the new staff and principal in various ways. Some resident staff welcomed the exposure to new teaching styles and methods. Other staff members viewed the new staff as invaders. Adjusting to new staff members was difficult for some teachers. In the first year, resident staff members adopted a wait-and-see attitude toward the new staff. In the second year, some staff members adjusted easily to the new administration, but others disliked the new environment.

The intricate social network of the Woodhaven faculty developed in a number of stages. The transferred staff's sense of belonging was expedited by having had previous contacts with the administration. Staff were afforded opportunities for fulfillment by becoming actively involved in school activities. Resident minority staff members were the first ones to assimilate the transferred staff and community.

Personality factors undoubtedly played a major part in the development of interactions among the total staff. Staff members initially clung to the familiar and resisted change in a variety of ways, depending most often on their individual personalities.

Over time, groups developed and changed. One portion of the resident staff still resisted the administration's policies. The researcher observed that the target dimension of power (Kantor and Lehr, 1979) appeared to be the most important factor in the social networking process.

The Woodhaven School climate changed with school consolidation. One important element in that change was the transferred administrator. Transferred parents' reactions to the principal were positive; they believed his presence evidenced support by the central school district administration. Most resident parents immediately were impressed by the educational policies initiated by the new principal. Also, resident and transferred students came to

accept the principal's policies enthusiastically. Staff members were given opportunities to develop educational programs in and out of the classroom with administrative support. Transferred teachers were most comfortable with the administrative leadership. It is important to note, however, that some resident staff members reacted negatively to the change in administrative policies.

Implications

This study is the first to examine what happens to a school community that is forced to leave its school and transfer to a new school environment. The longitudinal nature of ethnography necessitated studying the effects of what happened to the community beyond the initial school closing procedures. The researcher attempted to analyze a transferred community's adjustment following consolidation with an established school community. The events highlighted in this two-year ethnography bring into focus the factors school districts need to consider in closing a school.

Each school closing, because of the uniqueness of the school building itself, the other schools in the district, and the composition of the school community, must be evaluated individually. What worked for Evergreen, in a midwestern urban school district during a time of fiscal retrenchment and declining enrollments, may not be appropriate for a school in suburbia, a rural community, or an urban city in the West or East. In fact, because of the

individual nature of Evergreen's closing and consolidation, some of the forthcoming recommendations may not even be appropriate for a school across town in Lincoln.

It is important, therefore, to examine the successful elements of Evergreen's closing and its consolidation with Woodhaven, to determine what factors were meaningful and can be considered in other potential school closings and consolidations.

In closing the exosystem at Evergreen, elements that contributed to successful school consolidation adjustments and appear important to educators include:

1. A district that closes a school needs to recognize the school community as an important entity. In the case of Evergreen, the final school program paid tribute to the school and its heritage.

2. Transferred students need to be given an opportunity to praise and bid farewell to their school through final school activities. At Evergreen, teachers provided means for students and parents to observe the school closing and opened the way for the future school transfer. Students transferring to the new school also need to be given an opportunity to visit and become familiar with that school.

3. The principal needs to provide the necessary leadership in closing a school with dignity. In Lincoln, the central school district's closing procedures were

delineated, and the principal organized and supervised most elements in the closing process.

4. Staff members of a closing school need to be afforded options in transferring to a new educational facility. The Lincoln School District was large enough that staff members did not have to worry about job layoff or termination. Transferred teachers' preferences for grade-level placements were the most difficult to satisfy. Stress among staff concerning future teaching assignments was most apparent during the school closing.

5. Parents need to be afforded opportunities for their children to attend schools as near as possible to their present neighborhood. In Lincoln, adjustment was easiest for families whose children could walk to a nearby elementary school. Families who had to adjust to an unanticipated change in receiving schools were the most negatively affected by the school closure.

In the consolidation of schools, positive elements as found in this particular case that have important implications for education include the following:

1. A school community reacts positively to the simultaneous transfer of familiar educators. Having the support of known faculty members appears to help students and their parents adjust to a new school. Members of the transferred Evergreen community appreciated having a familiar support system during the change of schools.

2. The educational climate depends largely on the principal's actions. Hence the simultaneous transfer of a well-known principal facilitates a positive school climate for students, parents, and staff. Also a school administrator must command the school community's respect. In the case of Woodhaven, a proven administrator already had the respect of the transferred community and soon gained the esteem of many in the resident community.

3. The Parent Teacher Association, with the active support of the faculty and administration, can contribute to successful school consolidation. The Parent Teacher Association can encourage the surrounding community to support the school's educational programs and activities.

4. It is important to consider the needs of the resident community following school consolidation. The resident community needs time to adjust to the influx of a new school community into its exosystem. The adjustments required of both groups must be balanced so that a unified community can be created.

5. Students who are transferred to a new school appear to form friendships naturally after an initial adjustment period. At first, peer interactions are limited, but in time transferred students are assimilated into the mainstream of the new school. At Woodhaven, students perceived the contacts they made outside the classroom as being important in forming friendships. They also expressed some

dissatisfaction about the limited contact with consolidated school members beyond the school grounds.

6. Students' academic performance does not appear to be affected by the closing of an elementary school. Transferred students' math and reading scores were comparable to those of the consolidated school members.

7. Transferred parents may not be comfortable with consolidation in the beginning, but they soon seem to develop a sense of belonging to the new school. Factors that facilitated the transition included frequent communications from the teachers and principal and active involvement in school activities and events such as those sponsored by the Parent Teacher Association.

8. The physical move following school closure must be well organized. Teachers, in particular, are affected by the physical move, especially in the first months following school consolidation. In addition, placing transferred staff members in a suitable grade level is directly related to job satisfaction and perceived teaching excellence. Adjustment to a new school is hastened when transferred teachers immediately involve themselves in the schools' educational activities and social structure.

9. The social network of a school is delicate and intricate. The interrelationships between resident and transferred faculty following a school merger need special consideration in creating a unified school community.

Recommendations for Further Research

Realizing the unique nature of each school closing certain elements of Woodhaven's consolidation suggest questions that need further research:

1. Harmonious school consolidation does not occur by chance, but is the result of complex decision making on the part of school administrators. It is, therefore, suggested that the administrative decisions preceding school consolidation need to be more carefully studied to determine the impact of particular decisions on the process of consolidation.

2. The time period necessary for closing a school should be investigated further. For example, what turned out to be an appropriate timetable for closing Evergreen School may not be feasible for other schools. How temporal factors impede or expedite a closing and consolidation also deserves attention.

3. The principal's influence in school consolidation merits further research. In this study, the administrator's influence was a positive factor. The adjustments of a school community and staff cohesiveness under a different leadership style or when the principal is already established in a resident community should be investigated.

In hindsight, a study of the former principal's actions in comparison with the new principal's actions would

be important for understanding the significance of the principal in school transfers.

4. This researcher did not consider the effects of school closure on the community beyond the exosystem of the transferred students, parents, and staff and some of the resident students, parents and staff. Community involvement in and outside of school should be investigated further to provide interconnections between the involved mesosystems. Also, the established neighborhoods should be studied to determine what effect, if any, a closed school has on the residential area and on property values in the surrounding community. The cultural implications from further community study provide for interconnections in forming an understanding of the macrosystem under operation.

5. Students' adjustments were explored through standardized test scores, sociometric designs, journals, interviews with key informants, and participant observations. The researcher did not attempt to measure individual students' emotional and social adjustment to the transfer. The "experiences" of the developing student could be studied in greater detail to provide for an understanding of the interconnections in the school microsystems. This should be a topic of future research.

6. As stated previously, school consolidation at Woodhaven occurred with few negative overtones. A study of adjustments of a community rife with dissent about a school

closing could produce vastly different results. School consolidation within a community that is highly resistant to the school closing should be studied to compare the social and temporal factors in that community's adjustment. Such a comparison could provide a wealth of understandings of the interconnections in the settings of the micro-, meso-, and exosystems of schools and the community.

7. Because the students' academic performance was measured by only one standardized achievement test for a two year time span, the full extent of students' academic achievement was not measured in depth. Further studies should include formal academic tests and teacher assessments of students' performances on a long term basis of three to four years.

8. Because this researcher attempted to study the transferred community as a whole, many subtleties in the interactions and interconnections in the role of power between transferred and resident staff members, parents, and students were not explored in great detail. Elements underlying behaviors exhibited by the adjusting communities, which were beyond the scope of this investigation, deserve specific attention in future ethnographic studies.

Concluding Remarks

It appears that through further extensive fieldwork study, many of the underlying and sometimes "hidden" elements of a school culture can be revealed. This study

offered a wealth of information concerning the adjustments of children, parents, and elementary staff members. Further ethnographic research offers rich opportunities for establishing premises that have theoretical significance for education.

The participants in this study, the students, parents, and faculty, were examined in a variety of settings. The microsystems within the school were analyzed, interconnecting the forces that affected the students as well as the adults. The transferred and resident school population participated in a series of interconnections within the multitude of settings that formed the mesosystems.

The intersetting communications were transmitted and recorded relating interactions between staff and staff, staff and parents, staff and students, parents and students, parents and parents, and students and students. The interconnections between these interactions provided valuable knowledge relating to a school exosystem involving the ecological transition of a school closing and school consolidation.

Within an ecological focus, this research studied the interconnections between a defined event, a school closing and resultant consolidation, and the participants in the event, the students, parents, and faculty. The study alluded to the macrosystem underwhich all settings evolved;

however, the scope of the research did not transcend beyond the school exosystem.

The role of power in the interconnections of the settings pervaded the entire study. The macrosystem provided significance for the interconnecting series of events within micro-, meso-, and exosystems. The participants in the study all experienced growth within the settings, and through time participated in new roles and interpersonal interactions. The activities of the developing participants were separated in order to focus on specific roles and settings, yet the interconnections between the participants and settings pervaded throughout the research study.

The variables involved in systematically analyzing the effects of the macrosystem provide possibilities for future research. The importance of this study is that it initiated an ecological approach to an important transitional school event and interconnected the significant micro-, meso-, and exosystems in the developing population: the students enrolled in a midwestern, urban, fully integrated, neighborhood elementary school, their parents and their teachers.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY

APPENDIX A

CHRONOLOGY

March 1981-Master Plan for closing six elementary schools was announced by the Lincoln School District. Evergreen and Central Schools were scheduled to close in June 1983.

September 1981-Mr. Dennis Adams, who was also the science consultant with offices located at Evergreen, assumed principalship of Evergreen School for the 1981-82 and 1982-83 school years.

March 1983-The first school hearing on the proposed school boundary changes was held at Evergreen School.

March 1984-The second public hearing was held at Evergreen on the proposed boundary changes for students.

May 1983-Lincoln School Board officially adopted the school boundaries for the 1983-84 school year.

January-June 1983-An ethnographic study was conducted at Evergreen School.

June 1983-Evergreen School closed.

September 1983-A group of 77 students, the principal, the secretary, and four teachers were transferred to Woodhaven School from Evergreen.

September 1983-January 1985-An ethnographic study on the adjustments of students, parents, and staff members transferred to a new school was conducted at Woodhaven School.

APPENDIX B

STEPS LEADING TO ADOPTION OF REVISED ELEMENTARY BOUNDARIES

APPENDIX B

STEPS LEADING TO ADOPTION OF REVISED ELEMENTARY BOUNDARIES

1. Present preliminary boundaries to the Board for discussion
2. Discuss preliminary boundaries and process for approval with board attorney
3. Discuss preliminary boundaries with NAACP
4. Have building hearings on preliminary boundaries
5. Revise boundary proposals
6. Seek NAACP concurrence with boundaries and process
7. Board conducts public hearing
8. Board adopts boundaries
9. Seek court approval

Source: Lincoln School District Document

APPENDIX C

**GLOSSARY OF SCHOOLS AND INTERVIEWED PARENTS,
STUDENTS, AND STAFF MEMBERS**

APPENDIX C

GLOSSARY OF SCHOOLS AND INTERVIEWED PARENTS,
STUDENTS AND STAFF MEMBERSI. Schools: Lincoln School District

- A. Evergreen--Closed: 1983
- B. Woodhaven--Receiving school for 6 staff and 77 students from Evergreen: Target of the study
- C. Hudson--Receiving School for 90 students and 3 Evergreen staff members
- D. Riverside--Initially planned to receive Evergreen students: students ultimately transferred to Woodhaven
- E. Evergreen Place--Receiving school for 30 students and no staff from Evergreen
- F. Whitman--Receiving school for students of another closed school, 2 staff members from Evergreen and no Evergreen students
- G. Poorman Middle School--Receiving school for 100 students and 1 Evergreen staff member

II. Interviewed Administrators: 1984

- A. Mr. Dennis Adams--Principal of Evergreen and Woodhaven
- B. Mr. Brown--Principal of Hudson
- C. Mr. Howe--Principal of Evergreen Place
- D. Dr. Holt--Central Lincoln School District Administrator

III. Interviewed Staff Members

- A. Evergreen staff: Pilot study, 1983
 - 1. Mrs. Lisa Jackson--Sixth-grade teacher
 - 2. Mrs. Wright--Fifth-grade teacher
 - 3. Mrs. Ellen Cowles--Second-grade teacher
 - 4. Mrs. Hilton--Kindergarten teacher
 - 5. Mrs. White--Fifth-grade teacher
 - 6. Mrs. Michelle Franks--Sixth-grade teacher
 - 7. Mrs. Judy Jacks--School secretary
 - 8. Mr. Dennis Adams--Principal

B. Evergreen staff transferred to Woodhaven: 1984

1. Mrs. Michelle Franks--Fourth-grade teacher
2. Mrs. Lisa Jackson--Fourth-grade teacher
3. Mr. Tom Harrison--Evergreen and Woodhaven special education resource room teacher
4. Mrs. Judy Jacks--School secretary

B. Resident Woodhaven staff members: 1984

1. Mr. Matt Daniels--third-grade teacher
2. Mrs. Willa Mae Chapman--Fifth-grade teacher
3. Miss Ann Burns--First-grade teacher
4. Mrs. Sherry Woods--Support staff: Reading teacher
5. Mrs. Karen Turner--Support staff: Media specialist
6. Mrs. Dorothy Walters--School district support staff: Instructional specialist

IV. Interviewed Parents

A. Evergreen parents: Pilot study, 1983

1. Mrs. Roberts--Parent of one student
2. Mr. Roberts--Parent of one student
3. Mrs. Damon--Parent Teacher Association historian, parent of two students
4. Mrs. Edison--Parent of three students
5. Mr. Henrys--Parent of one student
6. Mrs. Carter--Parent of one student
7. Mrs. Jackson--Parent of three students
8. Mrs. Miller--Parent of two students
9. Mrs. King--Parent of two students

B. Transferred Evergreen parents with children attending Woodhaven: 1984

1. Mrs. Jefferson--Parent of three boys, two at Woodhaven
2. Mrs. Gilbert--Parent of two students
3. Mrs. King--Parent of three students, two at Woodhaven
4. Mrs. Miller--Parent of three students, one at Woodhaven
5. Mrs. Hinton--Parent of two students,
6. Mrs. Robinson--Parent of three students, one at Woodhaven
7. Mrs. Foster--Parent of five students, two at Woodhaven
8. Mrs. Russell--Parent of two students
9. Mrs. Jones--Parent of two students
10. Mrs. Mann--Parent of one student
11. Mrs. Klein--Parent of four students two at Woodhaven

C. Transferred Evergreen parents with children attending other receiving schools: 1984

1. Mrs. Fox--Parent of five students, four at Hudson
2. Mrs. Page--Parent of one student attending Riverside School with special permission
3. Mrs. Carter--Parent of two boys attending Hudson
4. Mrs. Fisher--Parent of one student attending Evergreen Place
5. Mrs. Roberts--Parent of two students attending Hudson
6. Mr. and Mrs. Kent--Parents of two students one attending Evergreen Place

C. Resident Woodhaven parents: 1984

1. Mr. and Mrs. Fuller--Parents of three students
2. Mr. Seller--Parent of two students
3. Ms. Powers--Parent of three students
4. Mrs. Washington--Parent of two students
5. Mrs. Cain--Parent of one student
6. Mrs. Knox--Parent of five students
7. Mr. Drake--Parent of three students

V. Students in the small-group workshops: 1984

A. Transferred fourth-and fifth-grade students

1. Janet
2. Jill
3. Sarah
4. Paul
5. Ryan
6. Suzie
7. Gerry
8. Gail
9. Matt
10. Lynn

B. Transferred first-and second-grade students

1. Sue
2. Brent
3. Janice
4. Jimmy
5. Ron
6. Marie
7. Jon
8. Helen
9. Vicky
10. Gary

C. Resident fourth-and fifth-grade students

1. Nancy
2. Isabel
3. Ling
4. Joy
5. Randy
6. Joseph
7. Mary
8. Donna

D. Resident first-and second-grade students

1. Anne
2. Bob
3. Suzanne
4. Frank
5. Chad
6. Bruce
7. Neal
8. Wanda
9. Debra

APPENDIX D

MEMO TO STAFF: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

APPENDIX D

MEMO TO STAFF: PARTICIPANT OBSERVATIONS

Date: September 9, 1983

To: Teachers and Interviewed Parents

From: Sally Edgerton

Topic: Participant Observations During the School Year

The results of declining enrollments of students in _____ have forced the closing of some elementary schools. Over 50 students now attending _____ experienced a school closing when _____ closed in June 1983. As part of a continuation of a study on school closings, I am presently following the students, parents, and teachers affected by the closing of _____. The intent of the study is to explore the effects of the school closing and to determine the adjustments made by the students, parents, and staff members in the year following a transfer to a receiving school. The research is part of a doctoral dissertation under the direction of Dr. Sheila Fitzgerald of the College of Education at Michigan State University.

The research is ethnographic in nature, meaning that participant observations will be made by myself during the school year. Observations will be made before and after school, during lunch, and at any extracurricular activities such as PTA meetings. Participant observations will be recorded in field notes written after the school day. Interviews, when appropriate and possible, will be conducted to extend and validate my observations. Also, a small-group of students will be observed regularly during a small group creative writing workshop.

I appreciate your consideration in my research, which will continue throughout the school year. Any information gathered will be strictly confidential, and all subjects will remain anonymous. All voluntary interviews will be confidential, and no names will be used in any research report based on any interview.

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR TEACHERS, PARENTS, AND STUDENT PARTICIPANTS IN SMALL-GROUP WORKSHOPS

APPENDIX E

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STAFF, PARENTS, AND STUDENT
PARTICIPANTS IN SMALL-GROUP WORKSHOPS

Questions for staff, parents, and students:

1. What do you think about Woodhaven?
2. How do you think you were received by the resident community?
3. What are your positive thoughts about the new school and the change?
4. What are your negative thoughts?
5. What do you think others think about Woodhaven?
6. What do you think about your own feelings about the school?
7. What do you remember about your thoughts during the school closing of Evergreen?
8. Do you have anything else to add?

Questions for parents:

9. What do you think about your child's adjustment?
10. What thoughts has your child told you about Woodhaven, positive or negative?
11. What do you think best helped you and your child's adjustment to Woodhaven?
12. What would you change in the transfer process of your child to better his or her adjustment to Woodhaven?
13. What events were significant in the adjustment process at Woodhaven?

APPENDIX F

CONSENT LETTERS

APPENDIX F

CONSENT LETTER TO "KEY INFORMANT" PARENTS

Dear _____,

A creative writing workshop is being planned for a group of students at _____. Your child's teacher recommended your child may be interested in participating in this project. Present plans center around creating motivations for writing, which would include small-group discussions, art activities, listening to good literature, and possibly some computer work. The group will meet every other week during the lunch period, eating lunch in my room.

I would appreciate your consent in allowing your child to take part in this project. A secondary goal for the workshop is to observe children's adjustments in transferring to a new school after attending a closed elementary school. The observations will be used in a doctoral dissertation on students, parents, and staff experiencing a school transfer after the closing of an elementary school. My research is under the direction of Dr. Sheila Fitzgerald of the College of Education at Michigan State University.

All observations of children will remain strictly confidential, with all names remaining anonymous in any research report.

Your interest is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or desire additional information, please feel free to contact me at 374-4290 before or after school.

Sincerely,

Sally Edgerton

_____ I have read the above information and agree to allow my child to participate. He or she may discontinue the workshop at any time.

_____ I prefer that my child not participate in the workshop.

Parent's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

CONSENT LETTER TO PARENTS OF STUDENTS
WRITING IN CLASSROOM JOURNALS

September 12, 1983

Dear Parents,

Our class will be writing in journals this year as part of a dual project to develop reading and writing skills. The importance for students in the primary grades to speak and write frequently in beginning to read was expressed repeatedly in my summer readings. Our activities in motivating students for writing will center around a wide variety of experiences. Some of our favorite songs will be encouraged to be written down as the students remember them. Ideas from good literature, science, social studies, math, and art activities will be incorporated into our journal writing. Students will also be encouraged to write about their experiences in school. Some activities will involve older students and parent volunteers writing the students' thoughts from dictation into the journals.

I would appreciate your consent in allowing entries in the journals to be copied and used in a doctoral dissertation on students, parents, and teachers who experienced a school transfer as the result of a school closing. The research is under the direction of Dr. Sheila Fitzgerald of the College of Education at Michigan State University.

All journal entries will be kept confidential. No names will be used in any research report. The students will be able to keep their journals at the end of the school year.

Your interest is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or desire further information, please feel free to contact me at 374-4290 before or after school.

Sincerely,

Sally Edgerton

_____ I have read the above statement and allow my child's journal to be used in the study.

_____ I prefer that my child's journal not be used in the study.

Parent's Signature

Date

APPENDIX F

CONSENT LETTER TO KEY INFORMANTS AND PARENTS: A FINAL
FIELDTRIP

May 1984

Dear Parents,

To conclude our small-group writing activities for the school year, I have planned a special after school voluntary meeting. I will meet with two students during each after-school session. The activities will include writing a story and tape recording an interview related to school transfers.

Please note that all stories and interviews are confidential; with no names will be used in any research report. Before I take the students home, we will stop at McDonalds for a snack.

If your child wishes to participate, please sign the form below and also the attached field trip form.

Sincerely,

Sally Edgerton

_____ after school activity is planned for
_____.

Yes, I would like to attend the after-school activity.

Student signature

Yes, my child may participate in the after-school activity.

Parent signature

_____ My child cannot attend on the scheduled date.
Please reschedule.

APPENDIX G

SOCIOMETRY

APPENDIX G

SOCIOMETRIC QUESTIONNAIRE FOR GRADES ONE THROUGH FIVE*

Directions for Administration by the Classroom Teacher:

I am going to ask you to put a number by the name of each student in our class. Listen to the directions before you begin.

Put a 1 by the names of all your very best friends in this class.

Put a 2 by the names of your good friends, not best, just good friends.

Put a 3 by the names of kids who are not your friends, but who are Okay.

Put a 4 by the names of kids you don't know very well.

Put a 5 by the names of kids you don't know at all.

Older students may then continue on their own. You may want to put the following list on the chalkboard for assisting students.

1. Best friends
2. Good friends
3. Okay friends
4. Kids you don't know very well
5. Kids you don't know at all

Lower grades may want to have the list of students in the classroom read to them, as they give each name a number.

Have the students circle their own name upon completion of the questions.

Thank you for your assistance.

*Questions for this sociometric questionnaire were adapted from ideas from Bennett, (1981).

APPENDIX G

Table A.1

A SAMPLE RANKING OF TRANSFERRED STUDENTS ON SOCIOMETRIC
QUESTIONS

Grade 2/3*

September	January	May
34	22	20 Jon
41	23	26
42	24	27
43	28	29 Maria
46	28	34
47	29	35
49	30	36
50	31	37
50 Jon	32	37
54	34	37
56	34 Maria	39
57	35	39
57	36 Jon	39
57 Tim	36 Tim	44
57	41	45
57	42	46
58	48	51
60 Maria	59	58 Tim
62	59	
66	63	
66		

*This is a sample of a 1983-84 school year ranking of transferred students within a classroom of second and third graders based on five sociometric questions administered in September 1983, January 1984, and May 1984.

APPENDIX G

Table A.2

COMPARATIVE RANKING OF TRANSFERRED STUDENTS ON SOCIOMETRIC QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO GRADE: SEPTEMBER 1983 AND MAY 1984

Ranking in the Classroom	Fifth Grade		Fourth Grade	
	Sept.	May	Sept.	May
Top third	0	1	2	4
Middle third	0	3	3	3
Lower third	5	1	7	5

Ranking in the Classroom	Third Grade		Second Grade	
	Sept.	May	Sept.	May
Top third	1	5	0	2
Middle third	3	2	3	1
Lower third	7	4	3	3

Ranking in the Classroom	First Grade		Total Transferred Students	
	Sept.	May	Sept.	May
Top third	4	3	7	15
Middle third	2	3	11	12
Lower third	4	4	26	17

APPENDIX G

Table A.3

PERCENT OF CHANGE IN RANK ORDER OF TRANSFERRED STUDENTS ON
SOCIOMETRIC QUESTIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 1983 TO MAY 1984

Placement within the Classroom	Percent of Transferred Students
1. Lowering in status by 10 to 16 places	6.8%
2. Lowering in status by 4 to 9 places	13.6%
3. Maintaining status by 3 places	31.8%
4. Rising in status by 4 to 9 places	15.9%
5. Rising in status by 10 to 18 places	31.8%

APPENDIX G

Table A.4

COMPARATIVE RANKING OF RESIDENT STUDENTS ON SOCIOMETRIC
QUESTIONS ACCORDING TO GRADE: SEPTEMBER 1983 AND MAY 1984

Ranking in the Classroom	Fifth Grade		Fourth Grade	
	Sept.	May	Sept.	May
Top third	13	13	14	13
Middle third	16	13	11	12
Lower third	10	13	13	13

Ranking in the Classroom	Third Grade		Second Grade	
	Sept.	May	Sept.	May
Top third	19	15	15	13
Middle third	13	16	12	13
Lower third	14	15	8	9

Ranking in the Classrooms	First Grade		Total Resident Students	
	Sept.	May	Sept.	May
Top third	16	12	77	66
Middle third	16	16	68	70
Lower third	14	18	59	68

APPENDIX G

Table A.5

PERCENTAGE OF CHANGE IN RANK ORDER OF RESIDENT STUDENTS ON
SOCIOMETRIC QUESTIONS FROM SEPTEMBER 1983 TO MAY 1984

Placement within the Classroom	Percent of Resident Students
1. Lowering in status by 10 to 16 places	7.3%
2. Lowering in status by 4 to 9 places	23.5%
3. Maintaining status by 3 places	39.2%
4. Rising in status by 4 to 9 places	24.5%
5. Rising in status by 10 to 18 places	5.4%

APPENDIX H

STUDENT JOURNALS

APPENDIX H

TOPICS FOR FOURTH-GRADE JOURNALS

1. Write about yourself
2. Write about yourself and your school
3. Write about a good day or a bad day
4. Write about what you did in school today
5. Write about your part in preparing the Thanksgiving feast
6. Write about your favorite part of the Thanksgiving feast
7. Write about your Christmas vacation
8. Write about what you did in school yesterday
9. Write about your activities in school
10. Writing topic: A School Closing: (See Appendix H)
11. Writing topic: A Letter to a Student (See Appendix H)
12. Writing topic: Having a Friend Overnight (See Appendix H)
13. Write about what you think about the school year
14. Write about your summer vacation

APPENDIX H

CLASSIFICATION OF TOPICS INCLUDED IN THE JOURNAL WRITINGS
OF FIRST AND FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS*

1. Positive nonacademic topics: References to topics such as holidays, scouts, activities outside of school
2. Positive academic topics: References to activities such as liking school, writing with computers, reading, math, and field trips
3. Negative nonacademic topics: References to activities out of school such as not liking a time of year such as winter
4. Negative academic topics: References to topics such as not liking a subject or having a substitute teacher in the classroom
5. Positive or negative comments mentioning a resident student: A specific reference in the journal entry naming a resident student
6. Positive or negative comments mentioning a transferred student: A specific reference naming a transferred student
7. Positive or negative sibling comment: Specific references to a name of a sibling in the writing
8. Positive or negative comments about a teacher: Specific references to a teacher on the Woodhaven staff
9. Positive or negative comments about friends: Writings of first graders with reference to general friendships with other students rather than specific references to the names of students.

*The topics revealed in the students' writings were collected and classified into nine categories. The categorization was based on a system used by Rohrkemper (1981).

APPENDIX H

ROB

Rob is a second (fifth) grader at Woodhaven School. This is his first year at Woodhaven. Last year, Rob went to Evergreen School. Evergreen was closed at the end of the school year and, this year, many of Rob's friends went to a different school. In the fall, when Rob started school, there were many new faces among both his teachers and classmates.

Tell a story about how Rob felt at the beginning of the school year in September.

How did he feel about his new school at Christmas time?

APPENDIX H

SUE

Sue is a second (fifth) grader at Woodhaven School. This is her first year at Woodhaven. Last year, Sue went to Evergreen School. Evergreen was closed at the end of the school year and, this year, many of Sue's friends went to a different school. In the fall, when Sue started school, there were many new faces among her teachers and classmates.

Tell a story about how Sue felt at the beginning of the school year in September.

How did she feel about her new school at Christmas time?

APPENDIX H

JASON

Jason is a second (fifth) grader at Woodhaven School. In the fall, Jason had a teacher who was new to Woodhaven. Also, there were seven new boys and girls in his room when he didn't know from last year. Five of the kids live in a different area and ride the bus to Woodhaven. They used to go to Evergreen School, but now that the school is closed, they go to Woodhaven.

Tell a story about how Jason felt, in September, at the beginning of the school year.

How did he feel about his school and classmates at Christmas time?

APPENDIX H

ANDREA

Andrea is a second (fifth) grader at Woodhaven School. In the fall, Andrea had a teacher who was new to Woodhaven. Also, there were seven new boys and girls in her room whom she didn't know from last year. Five of the kids live in a different area and ride the bus to Woodhaven. They used to go to Evergreen School, but now that the school is closed, they go to Woodhaven.

Tell a story about how Andrea felt at the beginning of the school year in September.

How did she feel about her school and classmates at Christmas time?

APPENDIX H

AN OVERNIGHT INVITATION

Marti was a new student at Riverside School and in the fourth grade. When she started school in the fall, she didn't know many students in her class. None of the students were close friends. As the school year went on, Marti got to know many of the boys and girls in her classroom and in the other fourth grades. Some of the kids rode the bus with her, and others lived close enough to the school to walk home.

By spring vacation, though, Marti had met many students at Riverside and had made many friends. Because her family could not go anywhere during the vacation period, Marti's mother said she could invite one of her friends to her house to stay overnight. In thinking about her new friends, it was a hard decision for Marti to pick only one friend.

Pretend you are Marti. Who would you pick to stay overnight? Tell about a friend whom Marti might pick, and then tell why she decided to ask that one friend. What might the friend be like? What might happen when Marti asks her friend to stay overnight?

APPENDIX H

A LETTER

Next year another elementary in Lincoln school is going to close. The boys and girls from that school are going to go to a new school. Some of the kids will walk to a different school, and some of the kids will ride a bus to a school that is quite a distance from their old school.

This year, the students at Woodhaven had new boys and girls because of the closing of Evergreen. Now some of the students who used to go to Evergreen ride a bus to Woodhaven.

The students from the closing school and the students from the receiving school will have many of the same experiences next year that you had this year. In order to help the students at their new school, would you write a letter to a pretend boy or girl. In that letter, you may tell them how you felt getting to know new kids in your school. You might tell them how it felt to change schools, and ride a bus to school, instead of walking to school. Also, you might like to include in your letter your ideas for helping make the new school year happy and enjoyable.

APPENDIX H

NEWS ARTICLE

Yesterday an article was printed in the newspaper about a school being sold. Some of you know of a school you used to go to that has been, or is going to be, sold. Some of you may have heard your classmates talking about the selling of the old school. Maybe you haven't heard a thing until now.

Pretend that you used to go to a school that is now closed and no longer has students. The school has been sold and has been changed into an office building. Tell about how you might feel when you hear the news. Tell about how you might feel when you drive or walk by the school. Think and tell about some good things that happen when a school is closed and two schools combine groups of boys and girls into one building.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abramowitz, Susan, and Rosenfeld, Stuart. Declining Enrollment: The Challenge of the Coming Decade. Washington, D.C.: National Institute of Education, 1978.
- Alloppenna, Philip Anthony. "A Model for Closing Schools in Suburban School Districts." Ed.D. dissertation, New York University, 1977.
- Almy, Millie. Ways of Studying Children. New York: Teachers College Press, 1974.
- Bales, R. F. "A Theoretical Framework for Interaction Process Analysis." In Group Dynamics; Research and Theory. pp. 29-38. Edited by ___ Cartwright and ___ Zander. New York: Harper and Row, 1953.
- Bany, Mary A., and Johnson, Louis V. Educational Social Psychology. New York: Macmillan, 1975.
- Baxter, Cheryl, and Starr, Richard. "Use This Marketing Strategy to Turn Surplus Property Into Gold." American School Board Journal 169 (Oct. 1982): 23-25.
- Bennett, Christine. "A Study of Classroom Climate in Desegregated Schools." Urban Review 13 (3) (1981): 161-179.
- Berger, Michael A. "Why Communities Protest School Closings." Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, New York, New York, 1982.
- Bishop, Lloyd. "Dealing with Declining School Enrollment." Education and Urban Society 11 (May 1979): 285-295.
- Bogdan, Robert C., and Biklen, Sari Knopp. Qualitative Research for Education. Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1982.
- Borg, Walter, and Gall, Meredith D. Educational Research. New York: Longman, 1979.
- Boyd, William L. "The Changing Politics of Changing Communities." Education and Urban Society 11 (May 1979): 175-284.

- _____. "Policy Development in Declining Suburban School Districts." Paper presented at the National Institute of Education. New York: Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, 1982.
- Brodinsky, D. Declining Enrollment-Closing Schools, Problems and Situations. AASA Critical Issues Report. Arlington, Virginia: American Association of School Administrators, 1981.
- Bronfenbrenner, Urie. The Ecology of Human Development. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979.
- Burlingame, Martin. "Declining Enrollments and Small Rural Cities and Districts." Education and Urban Society 11 (May 1979): 313-332.
- Burns, Elliot. "Actions Public School Boards May Take to Reduce Resistance to Change During Times of Declining Enrollment." Ed.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1979.
- Bussard, Ellen. School Closings and Declining Enrollments. New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1981.
- Campbell, John D. "Peer Relations in Childhood." In Review of Child Development Research. Edited by M. L. Hoffman and L. W. Hoffman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1969.
- Canfield, Jack, and Wells, Harold C. 100 Ways to Enhance Self-Concept in the Classroom. New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1976.
- Cibulka, James G. "The Politics of School Closings in Ten U.S. Cities." Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association, New York, 1982.
- Colton, David, and Frelich, Alan. "Enrollment Decline and School Closing in a Large City." Education and Urban Society 11 (May 1979): 390-417.
- Cuban, Larry. "Shrinking Enrollment and Consolidation." Education and Urban Society. 11 (May 1979): 367-395.
- Dean, Joenathan. "Dealing with Decline: The Politics of Public School Closings." Eric/Cue Urban Diversity Series, No. 77. New York: Eric Clearinghouse on Urban Education, 1981. (ED 211-695)

- Dembowski, Frederic L., and Gay, Geneva. "Instructional Effects of Declining Enrollments." Educational Leadership 28 (Nov. 1980): 173-175.
- Divoky, D. "Burden of the Seventies: The Management of Decline." Phi Delta Kappan (Oct. 1979): 87-91.
- Doran, Bernadette. "Population Experts Say a Surprise Package Might Arrive at Your Schools." American School Board Journal 169 (Feb. 1982): 19-21.
- Eisenberger, Katherine E. "Closing a School: Some Ways to Ease the Trauma." School Management (Aug./Sept. 1974): 33-42.
- _____. "How to Prepare the Public for the Closing of a Neighborhood School." The American School Board Journal (June 1975): 42-43.
- _____, and Keough, William F. Declining Enrollment: What to Do. Arlington, Virginia: AASA, 1974.
- Epstein, C. D. Declining Enrollment. Arlington, Virginia: National School Public Relations Association, 1976.
- Erickson, Frederick. On Standards of Descriptive Validity in Studies of Classroom Activity. (Occasional Paper 16) East Lansing, Michigan: Michigan State University, Institute for Research in Teaching, 1979.
- _____. "Some Approaches to Inquiry in School-Community Ethnography." Council on Anthropology and Education Newsletter 8 (2) (1977): 58-69.
- _____. "What Makes School Ethnography, 'Ethnographic'?" Council on Anthropology and Education Newsletter 4 (July 1973): 10-19.
- Festinger, Leon. A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance. New York: Row, Peterson, and Co., 1957.
- Filling, Constance. "Prospects for an Ethnographic Approach to Urban Education." Education and Urban Society 15 (Oct. 1980): 159-177.
- Fowler, Delbert. "Effects of Declining Numbers: Poverty? Proscration? Planning?" NASSP Bulletin 64 (Nov. 1980): 1-6.
- Frankel, Martin. "Projecting a School Enrollment Turnaround." American Education 17 (Aug./Sept. 1981): 34-35.

- Gay, Geneva; Demoboski, Frederick L.; and McLennan, Robert L. "Preserving Quality of Education During Enrollment Declines." Phi Delta Kappan 62 (May 1981): 655-657.
- Glaser, Barney L., and Stauss, Anselm. The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine, 1969.
- Glidewell, John C.; Kantor, Mildred B.; Smith, Louis M.; and Stringer, Lorene A. "Socialization and Social Structure in the Classroom." In Review of Child Development Research, Vol.2. Edited by L. W. Hoffman and M. L. Hoffman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1966.
- Gorden, Raymond L. Interviewing: Strategy, Techniques and Tactics. Homewood, Illinois: Dorsey Press, 1980.
- Gorden, William, and Hughes, Larry W. "Consider This Before Closing Schools." American School Board Journal 167 (Feb. 1980): 31-33.
- Gotti, Margaret R. "Closing Schools in Two Districts: Managing Education in an Era of Decline." Ph.D. dissertation, Fordham University, 1981.
- Graves, Donald H. Writing: Teachers and Children at Work. Exeter, New Hampshire: Heineman Educational Books, 1982.
- Hall, Gene E. "Ethnographies and Ethnographic Data." Education and Urban Society 12 (May 1979): 349-366.
- Hord, Shirley. "Under the Eye of the Ethnographic." Education and Urban Society 12 (May 1979): 323-348.
- Iannoccone, Laurence. "The Management of Decline." Education and Urban Society 11 (May 1979) 418-430.
- Jackson, Philip. Life in the Classroom. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968.
- Kantor, David, and Lehr, William. Inside the Family: Toward a Theory of Family Process. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1975.
- Kaye, Susan. "Declining Enrollment in a Suburban School District: A Case Study of School Reorganization." Ed.D dissertation, Columbia University Teachers College, 1978.

- Lewis, Michael, and Rosenblum, Leonard A. (eds.). Friendship and Peer Relations. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.
- Lincoln School Documents. Lincoln School District, 1982, 1983, and 1984.
- Management of Declining Public School Enrollment. Michigan: Citizens Research Council of Michigan, 1978.
- McCall, George, and Simons, L. L. (eds.). Issues in Participant Observations. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1969.
- McGlothlin, Don C. "Face Declining Enrollments Imaginatively." American School and University 53 (May 1981): 2-5.
- Myrdal, Gunna. An American Dilemma. New York: Harper, 1944.
- Odden, Allan, and Vincent, Philip E. The Fiscal Impacts of Declining Enrollments Denver, Colorado: Education Finance Center, 1976.
- Ogbu, John V. "School Ethnography: A Multilevel Approach." Anthropology and Education Quarterly 12 (1981): 3-27.
- Ogletree, Earl J. "Parents Favor School Desegregation and Neighborhood Plan, But Reject Busing." 1981. (ED 212-703)
- Pauline, Lawrence, and Pitruzzello, Philip. "You Can Close Schools Without Enraging Everyone-Here's How." American School Board Journal 169 (July 1982): 21-38.
- Proshansky, Harold M. "The Development of Intergroup Attitudes" In Review of Child Development Research, Vol. 2. Edited by L. W. Hoffman and M. L. Hoffman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1966.
- Report of the Michigan Department of Education Task Force and Michigan's School Enrollment Decline: Projections and Implications. Lansing, Michigan: Michigan Department of Education, 1977.
- Rohrkemper, Mary McCaslin. "Classroom Perspectives Study: An Investigation of Differential Perceptions of Classroom Events." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1981.
- Rubin, Zick. Children's Friendships. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980.

- Sargent, Cyril G., and Hardy, Judith. Fewer Pupils/Surplus Space. New York: Educational Facilities Laboratories, 1974.
- Schatzman, Leonard, and Strauss, Anselm L. Field Research. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1973.
- Schwartz, Morris S. and Schwartz, Charlotte G. In Issues in Participant Observation. Edited by George J. McCall and J. L. Simmons, Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1969.
- Shantz, Carolyn Uhglinger. "The Development of Social Cognition." In Review of Child Development Research, Vol. 5. Edited by E. Mavis Hetherington, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975.
- Shaw, Robert C. "How Accurate Can Enrollment Forecasting Be?" NASSP Bulletin 64 (Nov. 1980): 13-19.
- Sheldon, Duane K. "The Relationship Between Teacher Self-Actualization and Length of Teaching Experience Among Elementary School Teachers in a District Experiencing Enrollment Decline." Ph.D. dissertation, Michigan State University, 1981.
- Simon, H. A. "A Formal Theory of Interaction of Social Groups." American Sociological Review 17 (1952): 202-211.
- Sitton, Thad. "The Child as Informant: The Teacher as Ethnographer." Language Arts 57 (May 1980): 540-545.
- Slawski, Carl J. Social Psychological Theories: A Comparative Handbook for Students. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1981.
- Smith, Richard. "Skepticism and Qualitative Research." Education and Urban Society 12 (May 1980): 383-394.
- Spathelf, David Eugene. "Administrative Alternatives to Declining Public School Enrollments in Michigan." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Michigan, 1978.
- Spindler, George.(ed.). Doing the Ethnography of Schooling. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.
- Spradley, James P. The Ethnographic Interview. New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1978.

_____, and Mann, Brenda. The Cocktail Waitress. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975.

Thomas, M. Donald. "Administrative Leadership in School Closures." NASSP Bulletin 64 (Nov. 1980): 21-26.

Valencia, Richard. "The School Closure: Issues and the Chicano Community." Urban Review 12 (4) (1980): 2-12.

Wachtel, Betsy, and Power, Brian (eds.). Rising Above Decline. Boston, Massachusetts: Institute for Responsive Education, 1979.

Wade, Jacqueline E. "Role Boundaries and Pay Back: 'Switching Hats' in Participant Observations." Anthropology and Education Quarterly 15 (1984): 211-244.

Wedlund, Gerald Alven. "An Exploratory Study of the Characteristics of Closed Elementary Schools and the Impact of School Closings on Neighborhoods in Columbus, Ohio." Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1980.

Wells, Barrie, and Lenke, Joanne M. (eds.). Stanford Achievement Test: National Norms Booklet. New York: The Psychological Corporation, Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1983.

Wholeben, Brent E. "How to Determine Which School to Close." NASSP Bulletin 64 (Nov. 1980): 7-11.

Wilcox, Kathleen. "Ethnography as a Methodology and Its Applications to the Study of Schooling; A Review." In Doing the Ethnography of Schooling. Edited by George Spindler. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1982.

Wolcott, Harry F. "Mirrors, Models, and Monitors: Educator Adaptations of the Ethnographic Innovation." In Doing the Ethnography of Schooling. Edited by George Spindler. New York: Holt, Rinehart Winston, 1982.

Woodhaven School Documents. Woodhaven School, Lincoln School District, 1983-1895.

Yeager, Robert F. "Rationality and Retrenchment." Education and Urban Society 11 (May 1979): 296-313.

Yinger, Robert, and Clark, Christopher H. Reflective Journal Writing: Theory and Practice. East Lansing: Institute on Research in Teaching, Michigan State University, 1981.

Zerchykow, Ross. "A Review of the Literature and an Annotated Bibliography on Managing Decline in School Systems." Boston, Massachusetts: Institute for Responsive Education, 1982. (ED 217-533)

Zigarmi, Drea, and Zigarmi, Patricia. "The Psychological Stresses of Ethnographic Research." Education and Urban Society 12 (May 1980): 291-322.

Zigler, Edward, and Child, Irvin L. Socialization and Personality Development. Reading, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley, 1973.

GENERAL REFERENCES

GENERAL REFERENCES

- Agar, Michael. The Professional Stranger, An Informal Introduction to Ethnography. New York: Academic Press, 1980.
- Benham, Barbara; Giesen, Phil; and Oakes, Jeannie. "A Study of Schooling: Students' Experiences in Schools." Phi Delta Kappan 61 (Jan. 1980): 337-340.
- Berstein, Joanne E. Books to Help Children Cope With Separation and Loss. New York: R. R. Bowker Co., 1983.
- Brim, Orville G. Jr., and Kagan, Jerome. Constancy and Change in Human Development. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1980.
- Chao, Lincoln. Statistics: Methods and Analyses. New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1969.
- Cohen, Dorothy H., and Stern, Virginia. Observing and Recording the Behavior of Young Children. New York: Teachers College Press, 1978.
- Cook, Lloyd Allen (ed.). Toward Better Human Relations. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1952.
- Crabtree, June E. "The Year I Was 'Absorbed.'" Principal (Sept. 1982): 46-47.
- Crow, Lester D. Psychology of Human Adjustment. New York: Knopf, 1967.
- Damon, William. The Social World of the Child. San Francisco, California: Jossey-Bass, 1977.
- Finnan, Christine Robinson. "The Emergence of Policy Statements From Ethnographic Case Studies." Urban Review 12 (1980): 201-209.
- Forgas, Joseph P. (ed.). Social Cognition. London: Academic Press, 1981.
- Gilmore, Perry, and Glattborn, Allen A. (eds.). Children in and Out of School. Washington, D. C.: Center for Applied Linguistics, 1982.

- Goethals, George R., and Worchel, Stephen. Adjustment and Human Relations. New York: Knopf, 1981.
- Grant, Ben E. "Facility Planning." American School and University. 53 (Aug. 1981): 16.
- Hartup, Willard. "Peers as Agents of Social Reinforcement." In The Young Child: Reviews of Research. Edited by W. W. Hartup and N. L. Smothergell. Washington, D. C.: NAEYC, 1967.
- Hollander, E. P., and Hunt, Raymond G. (eds.). Current Perspectives in Social Psychology. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- John, Howard M. "School Closure: How Much Impact on the Community?" Phi Delta Kappan 59 (Jan. 1978): 357-359.
- Johnson, Nancy, and Gardner, Cynthia. "Toward a Prototype for Training Classroom Ethnographies." Education and Urban Society 12 (May 1980): 367-382.
- Kelley, Arthur, "The Closing of Marion Carll School." National Elementary Principal. 53 (May/June 1974): 44-45.
- Klein, M. Frances. How to Study a School. West Lafayette, Indiana: Kappa Delta Phi, 1983.
- Kohlberg, Lawrence. "Development of Moral Character and Moral Ideology." In Review of Child Development Research, Vol. 1. Edited by J. L. Hoffman and L. W. Hoffman. New York: Russell Sage Foundation, 1964.
- Koller, Marvin R., and Ritchie, Oscar W. The Sociology of Childhood. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1978.
- Lomon, Nigel. Attitudes and Their Measurement. London: B. T. Batsford, Ltd., 1973.
- McDavid, John W., and Harari, Herbert. Psychology and Social Behavior. New York: Harper and Row, 1974.
- Melson, Gail Freedman. Family and Environment: An Ecological Perspective. Minneapolis, Minnesota: Burgess Publ., Co., 1980.
- Moreno, J. L. Sociometry and the Science of Man. New York: Beacon House, 1956.

- Moreno, J. L. (ed.). The Sociometry Reader. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press of Glencoe, 1960.
- Phillips, John L., Jr. The Origins of Intellect: Piaget's Theory. San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Co., 1969.
- Piaget, Jean. The Origins of Intelligence in Children. Translated by Margaret Cook. New York: International Universities Press, 1952.
- Rist, Ray C. The Invisible Children: School Integration in American Society. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1978.
- Rubin, Kenneth H., and Ross, Hildy S. Peer Relationships and Social Skills in Childhood. New York: Springer-Verlag, 1982.
- Sirotnik, Kenneth A. "Parents and Their Children: A Study of Congruence on Attitudes About School." A Study of Schooling in the United States. Technical Report Series, no. 13. Los Angeles: California University, 1981. (ED 214-883)
- Spivack, George; Platt, Jerone J.; and Shure, Myrna B. The Problem-Solving Approach to Adjustment. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1976.
- Tikunoff, William J., and Ward, Beatrice A. "Conducting Naturalistic Research on Teaching." Education and Urban Society 12 (May 1980): 263-290.
- Tyler, Ralph. "Dynamic Response in a Time of Decline." Phi Delta Kappan 83 (June 1982): 655-658.
- Wax, Rosalie. Doing Fieldwork: Warnings and Advice. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971.
- Youniss, James. Parents and Peers in Social Development. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.