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**THE MANAGEMENT OF CONSTITUENT GROUPS
IN A DECLINING ENVIRONMENT**

**By
Susan Kay Smith**

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Management

1986

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ABSTRACT

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By

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Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the process whereby organizational decision makers (the dominant coalition) manage and are influenced by interest (constituent) groups in a declining environment. The sense making process used by members of the dominant coalition as well as by members of constituent groups was also investigated.

Research Design

A two year longitudinal study of a school district that was experiencing environmental decline was conducted. The qualitative research methods of participant observation, interviewing and the review of archival data were used. Both the organizational and individual units of analysis were utilized.

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Findings

1. The decline responses chosen by members of the dominant coalition (the board of education) were influenced by (a) their perceptions of what powerful constituent groups wanted, (b) their values, (c) past board decisions and (d) the perceived decision making paradigm used by an outside funding agency in reducing funds available to the district.

2. The closing of an elementary school led to community conflict and the formation of a partisan constituent group.

3. The availability of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction did not prevent conflict over the school closing from occurring.

4. The degree to which the dominant coalition was forced to bargain with the constituent group was a function of that group's power in relation to the dominant coalition.

5. Legislation and the nonsubstitutability of resources made the avoidance of constituent group influence and control difficult. The dominant coalition used cooptation and other strategies in managing the demands of constituent groups.

6. The individuals who experienced the loss of their school perceived it as a crisis event and as a personal loss. Their first reaction was numb inaction followed by defensive retreat, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance of the situation.

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7. Individuals bracketed and interpreted certain segments of information related to the decline phenomenon. An individual's sense making process was influenced by his/her (a) criteria for organizational effectiveness, (b) perception of constituent demands and (c) perception of the power situation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses appreciation to the members of her Dissertation Committee, Dr. Susan Florio-Ruane and Dr. Mary Van Sell, and especially to the chairperson of the committee, Dr. John A. Wagner, for their assistance and patience in the preparation of this work.

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CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

Purpose and Significance of Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the process whereby organizational decision makers (members of the dominant coalition) manage and are influenced by interest (constituent) groups in a declining environment. The sense making process used by members of the dominant coalition as well as by members of constituent groups will also be investigated.

In this chapter, the author reviews the relevant decline literature in order to identify those issues which need further study. An appropriate research design and methodology for studying those issues which the current decline literature does not address are described. In chapter two, the reader is provided some historical and background information that sets the stage for the main event of the study: the closing of a school. Chapters three, five and seven are data chapters in which the author describes what transpired during the period that elapsed between the superintendent's recommendation to close a school and the court's judgement regarding the school

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board's decision to do so. Chapters four, six and eight are analytical in nature. In them, the author discusses decline, conflict and the management of constituent groups, as observed in the study and as described in the literature. In chapter nine, the sense making process used by individuals while the organization was experiencing environmental decline is examined. Chapter ten includes a summary and conclusions reached as a result of the study. Suggestions for future research and implications for organizational theorists and practicing managers are also given.

Review of Decline Literature

Interest in decline is a relatively recent phenomenon. In the United States, organizational growth has been equated with effectiveness (Yuchtman and Seashore, 1967), and has been viewed as a desirable norm (Katz and Kahn, 1978). Organizational theories are typically based on an assumption of growth, and organizational research has been preoccupied with growth and its effects (Whetten, 1980). As late as 1978, Katz and Kahn were optimistic about organizations' abilities to avoid decline by being open and therefore able to postpone entropy.

The interest of organizational research and theory in growth has reflected the real world where growth has been characteristic of so many of our institutions. Since World

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War II, the expansion of organizations, increased specialization and differentiation, and problems of integration have been the major concerns of practicing managers (Whetten, 1980).

There is a growing realization, however, that organizations which experience decline are going to become more common. American experience with inflation, unemployment, restricted resources and environmental concerns call for a new organizational paradigm based on scarcity of resources rather than on growth. While several organizational theorists mentioned the problem of decline prior to 1974 (Cohen, March and Olsen, 1972; Cyert, 1963; Thompson, 1967), William G. Scott (1974) was the first theorist to recognize the need for a new paradigm. According to Scott, the classical and system models are based on a paradigm which values growth, abundance and consensus. Yet, this paradigm is no longer appropriate in a world which is experiencing declining reserves of natural resources and growing resistance to environmental contamination. The Club of Rome has predicted that the present levels of population growth and consumption cannot continue to be sustained by available world resources (Meadows, 1972). Scott proposes a "radical model" to replace the conservative model of classical and systems theory. The radical model would be based on paradigmatic values of stability or decay, scarcity and conflict.

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In considering the lack of congruence between the current management paradigm and the phenomenon of decline Scott (1976) suggests three possible directions we might take in the management of decline.

1. Accept the decline in material abundance and economic growth and adopt the new values of mystical experiences and self-realization.

2. Adopt the recommendations of the Club of Rome (Meadows, 1972). That is, live within the constraints of the environment, acknowledging the limits to technology and growth. This direction would also require a change in values.

3. Respond to crises with familiar techniques and values. That is, external crises of energy, food and unemployment would be addressed by using the technically rational methods that have succeeded in the past.

Scott predicts that the latter approach is the most likely one to be adopted. He foresees increased centralization and administrative control as a result of conditions of scarcity and decline.

Boulding (1975) speaks of the need to learn more about the management of decline. Addressing a regents convocation of the University of the State of New York, he predicted that the decline being experienced in the educational system would expand into all segments of society and that the next 50-100 years would be an "age of slow down". Since our

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society has previously enjoyed growth in almost all aspects of our social life, we are ill-equipped to manage the decline phenomenon, in his view.

Much of the literature reflects a dichotomy between the prescriptions for managing decline and the expectations of how organizations would act, given their usual response to other types of crises (Whetten, 1980). A number of organizational theorists prescribe innovation and self-designing systems of organization as appropriate responses to environmental change and decline (Cyert, 1978; Hedberg, Nystrom and Starbuck, 1976; Weick, 1979). The crisis literature, on the other hand, indicates that organizations experiencing crises tend to become more centralized, standardized and controlled (Khandwalla, 1978). To the extent that decline is perceived as an organizational crisis, then, one would expect organizations to act just the opposite from the prescribed behaviors. In the field of education, this is exactly what has happened (Whetten, 1981). This discrepancy between the prescribed behavior of innovation and observed behaviors is due to organizational and contextual characteristics which reinforce the efficiency approach: treating retrenchment as an internal resource allocation problem (Whetten, 1981).

In the business literature, corporate collapse is explained as resulting from management's inability to respond appropriately to environmental change. This

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inability may be due to a lack of management skill or to external factors over which management has no control, such as actions taken by governmental units, unions, consumer organizations or simply to bad luck (Argenti, 1976; Nystrom, Hedberg and Starbuck, 1976; Schendel, Patton and Riggs, 1976; Starbuck and Hedberg, 1977).

Most writers in the political science literature view the effective management of decline as requiring not only the technically-rational tools associated with the management of organizations but also an understanding of the political process involved in responding to environmental decline (Bardach, 1976; Behn, 1978 and 1980; Hardy, 1982).

The education literature is primarily prescriptive, exhorting school administrators to involve the community and to use comprehensive planning as techniques for reducing community opposition to cutback decisions (Brody, 1976; Green, 1974; Zerchykov, 1981). Berger (1982), however, has pointed out that in actual practice neither community involvement nor the use of comprehensive planning has reduced community opposition.

Conceptually, the decline process has been explained by the work of Levine (1978,1981), Jick and Murray (1982) and Zammuto and Cameron (1983).

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Levine

Levine (1978) was the first to propose a typology for the causes of decline. The causes are classified into four categories, depending on whether they are external or internal to the organization and whether they are political or economic/technical in nature. The four categories are problem depletion, environmental entropy, organizational atrophy and political vulnerability.

Problem depletion includes problems that have been solved or reduced by demographic changes, such as declining enrollments. Environmental entropy is the erosion of the environment's ability to support the organization at its previous level. Reduction in state aid to school districts would be one example. Taxpayers revolts in California and Michigan would be another. Organizational atrophy is poor management. Political vulnerability is an organization's inability to prevent budget cutbacks and program contractions demanded by the environment. This is due to a lack of expertise and to poor management of the organization in the past.

Levine also notes that organizations may choose the strategy of resisting decline or smoothing it. He has devised a model which matches specific cutback strategies with particular categories of decline (see Figure 1). For each category of decline (problem depletion, environmental entropy, political vulnerability and organizational

External

Tactics to Resist Decline
(Problem Depletion)

Tactics to Smooth

	<u>Tactics to Resist Decline</u>		<u>Tactics to Smooth Decline</u>	
	<u>(Problem Depletion)</u>			
External Political	1. Diversify programs, clients and constituents 2. Improve legislative liason 3. Educate the public about the agency's mission 4. Mobilize dependent clients 5. Become "captured" by a powerful interest group or legislator 6. Threaten to cut vital or popular programs 7. Cut a visible and widespread service a little to demonstrate client dependence		1. Make peace with competing agencies 2. Cut low prestige programs 3. Cut programs to politically weak clients 4. Sell and lend expertise to other agencies 5. Share problems with other agencies	
Economic/ Technical	<u>(Environmental Entropy)</u> 1. Find a wider and richer revenue base (e.g., metropolitan reorganization) 2. Develop incentives to prevent disinvestment 3. Seek foundation support 4. Lure new public and private sector investment 5. Adopt user charges		1. Improve targeting on problems 2. Plan with preservative objectives 3. Cut losses by distinguishing between capital investments and sunk costs 4. Yield concessions to taxpayer and employers to retain them	

Figure 1
Some Cutback Management Strategies

Note. From "Organizational Decline and Cutback Management" by C.H. Levine, 1978, Public Administration Review, 38, p.321. Copyright 1978 by Public Administration Review. Reprinted by permission.

Internal

<u>Tactics to Resist Decline</u> (Political Vulnerability)	<u>Tactics to Smooth Decline</u>
1. Issue symbolic responses like	1. Change leadership at each

Internal Political	Tactics to Resist Decline (Political Vulnerability)	Tactics to Smooth Decline
1. Issue symbolic responses like forming study commissions and task forces	1. Change leadership at each stage in the decline process	
2. "Circle the wagons," i.e., develop a siege mentality to retain esprit de corps	2. Reorganize at each stage	
3. Strengthen expertise	3. Cut programs run by weak subunits	
	4. Shift programs to another agency	
	5. Get temporary exemptions from personnel and budgetary regulations which limit discretion	

Figure 1 (cont'd.)

	<u>Tactics to Resist Decline</u>	<u>Tactics to Smooth Decline</u>
Economic/ Technical	(Organizational Atrophy)	
	1. Increase hierarchical control	1. Renegotiate long term contracts to regain flexibility
	2. Improve productivity	2. Install rational choice techniques like zero-base budgeting and evaluation research
	3. Experiment with less costly service delivery systems	3. Mortgage the future by deferring maintenance and downscaling personnel quality
	4. Automate	4. Ask employees to make voluntary sacrifices like taking early retirements and deferring raises
	5. Stockpile and ration resources	5. Improve forecasting capacity to anticipate further cuts
		6. Reassign surplus facilities to other users
		7. Sell surplus property, lease back when needed
		8. Exploit the exploitable

Figure 1 (cont'd.)

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atrophy), there are a number of tactics that organizational decision makers might use in response to decline. Those tactics are further divided into two groups: those that might be used to resist decline and those that could be used to smooth decline, that is, to adapt the organization to decline. Sometimes different levels of the organization may adopt different strategies. Top management may opt for smoothing decline by contraction of the organization. Subunits, on the other hand, would be expected to resist decline in the interests of survival.

Organizations also have to choose the basis on which they are going to cutback, if they choose that strategy. That is, cuts may be made on the basis of equity or efficiency. Equitable cuts are made "across the board". All employees are equally likely to be hurt and cuts are made without regard to their long-run effects on the organization. Efficiency cuts try to minimize the damage to the organization in the long-run by cutting out weaker, inefficient programs, without regard to equity of distribution. Equity cuts are easier for management to make since they are socially acceptable, easier to justify and involve lower decision making costs.

Later, Levine (1981) developed a model of administrative responses to fiscal stress based on a review of the literature and the New York City experience (see Figure 2). Levine uses the model to make predictions which

Formal Authority Structure



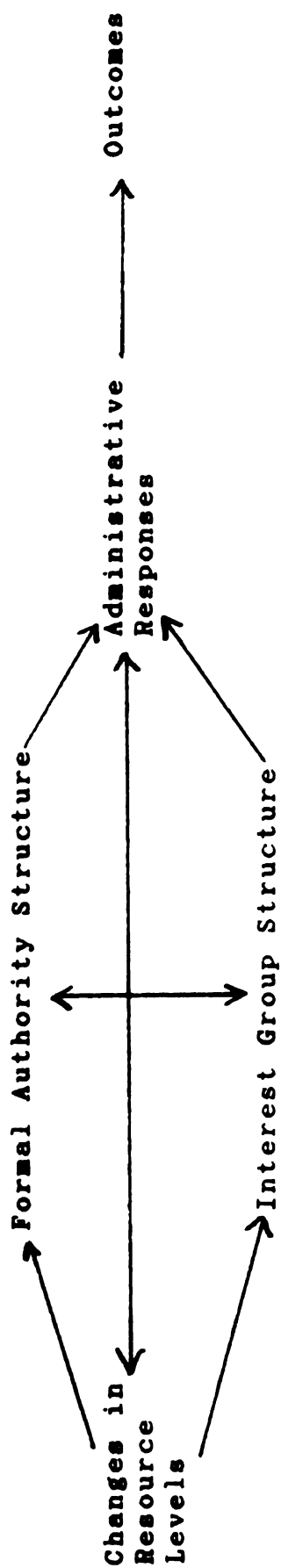


Figure 2

Administrative Responses to Fiscal Stress

Note. From The Politics of Retrenchment (p.35) by C.H. Levine, I.S. Rubin and G.G. Wolohojan, 1981, California: Sage Publications, Inc.. Copyright 1981 by Sage Publication, Inc.. Reprinted by permission.

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link the type of change in resource level with characteristics of the political structure (i.e. formal authority structure and interest group structure), administrative responses or strategies, and outcomes. For example, organizations experiencing moderate decline (resources do not cover the inflationary rise in program costs) will be characterized by weak central control and interest groups will be fragmented but active. Strategies adopted by the administration will be those of stretching (attempting to do more with less) and resisting. Cuts will be across the board, rather than targeted. There will be no major shifts in the balance of power among interest groups and departments. The model was generally supported by the data (four case studies of local governments' attempts to manage fiscal stress).

In addition, Levine developed a typology to explain the differences in organizational responses to resource level changes (see Figure 3). The degree of openness to interest groups determines the content of the organization's strategy and the degree of centralization of formal authority determines the degree to which that strategy is implemented. The more politicized the environment, the more open the organization's administration will be to interest groups. Thus, if it is open to interest groups, the administration's strategy will reflect the interest group's priorities (across the board cuts or cuts based on political criteria)

Centralization of Formal Authority

	High	Low
Openness to Interest Groups	High	Low
	Interest group strategy implemented	Interest group strategy not implemented
	Low	
	Managerial strategy implemented	Managerial strategy not implemented

Note. Openness to interest groups is a function of the politization of the environment.

Figure 3

Typology of Organizational Responses to Resource Level Changes

Note. From The Politics of Retrenchment (p.206) by C.H. Levine, I.S. Rubin and G.G. Wolohojan, 1981, California: Sage Publications, Inc.. Copyright 1981 by Sage Publication, Inc.. Reprinted by permission.

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rather than managerial priorities (targeted cuts based on technical criteria). The more centralized the formal authority structure, the more likely that the strategy (whatever its content) will actually be implemented.

Jick and Murray

Jick and Murray (1982) have developed a model that provides a framework for analyzing organizational responses to funding reductions in the public sector (see Figure 4). They are concerned with two basic sets of outcomes: strategic decision responses made by the organization's dominant coalition and the crisis syndrome behavior exhibited by the rest of the organizational members in response to those decisions.

Strategic Decision Responses

The strategic decision responses chosen by the dominant coalition may be external or internal. External responses are the choices of what to do, if anything, to cause existing providers of funds to cease cutting or to cause new providers to make up the difference. Internal responses are those regarding who or what to cut.

The choice of specific external and internal strategic responses is a function of whether members of the dominant coalition believe the causes of the reduction in funding are rational or political. If the cuts are believed to be the result of a political decision, then the perceived power

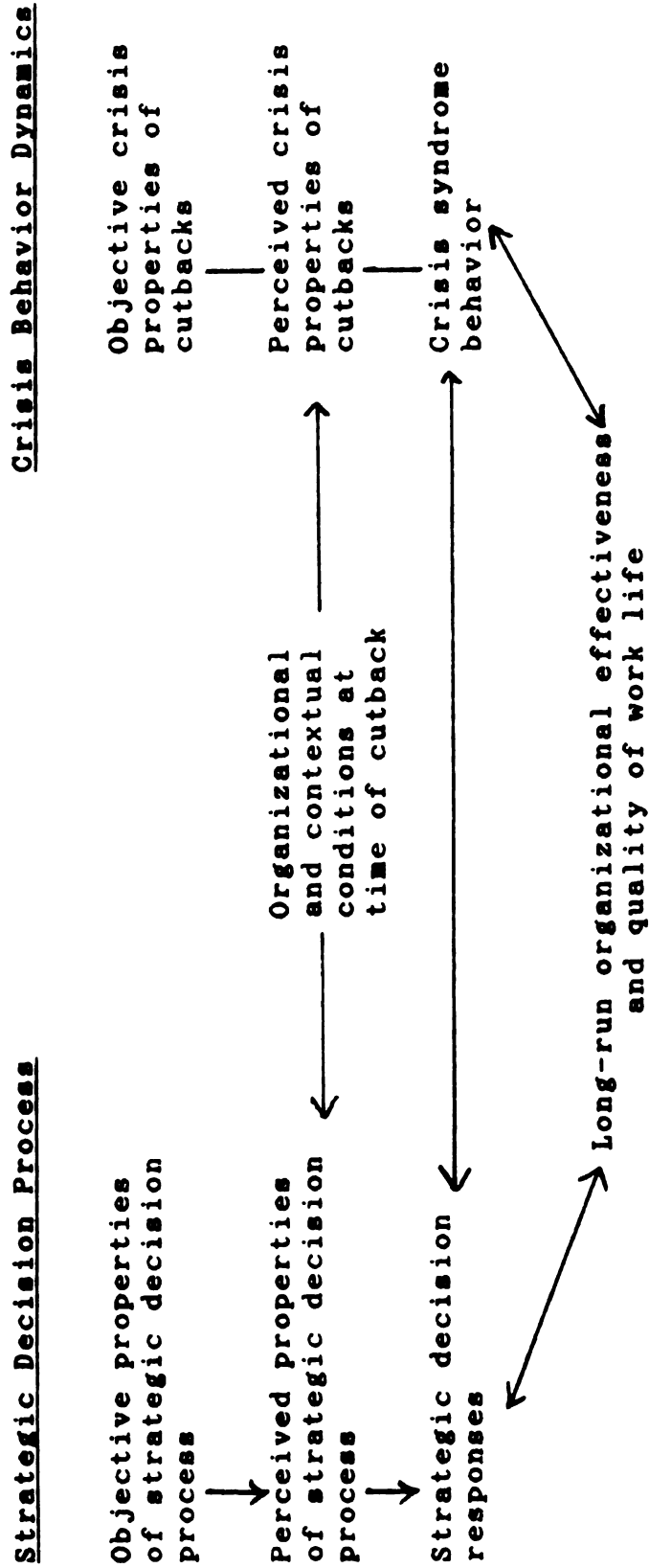


Figure 4

Organizational Responses to Funding Reductions

Note. From "The Management of Hard Times: Budget Cutbacks in Public Sector Organizations" by T.D. Jick and V.V. Murray, 1982, Organization Studies, 3, p.143. Copyright 1982 by Organization Studies. Reprinted by permission.

situation becomes relevant. Whether the decision making process used by resource providers is perceived as being rational or political is influenced by the "objective" properties of the strategic decision process, characteristics of the organization's structure and environment, and the personalities of the key actors.

External strategies based on a rational paradigm. If top decision makers believe that those who reduced the organization's funding did so on rational grounds and were correct in their assessment that the organization needed less money, due to declining enrollment, for example, then the external strategy is one of acceptance, with all energy being devoted to implementing the necessary cuts. If, however, top management believes that the decision making process was rational but that the conclusion was incorrect because those who decided to reduce funding had faulty data or interpreted it incorrectly, then the external strategy will be one of convincing the funding agency of its error by providing "correct" data which leads to "correct" conclusions.

External strategies based on a political paradigm. If, on the other hand, strategic decision makers believe that the funding source does not share the focal organizations' objectives or is being forced to make budget cuts by powers beyond its control, then a number of responses are possible. Since the objectives of the funding agency and the focal

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organization are not perceived to be the same, simply providing more facts or being persuasive is not viewed as an appropriate response. Rather, the funding agency must be forced into making concessions through the use of power. Acceptance of the funding agency action will occur only if the strategic decision makers believe they do not have enough power, acting alone or in concert with others, to bring about such a capitulation. If decision makers believe they control outcomes which are important to the funding source, then they will try to use those outcomes to obtain concessions from the funding source. Threats to reduce services to clients so as to politically embarrass the funding source would be an example. Instead of this direct confrontational approach, the external strategy might be one of forming coalitions with similar organizations or of using the media to build public support for their cause.

Internal strategies based on a rational paradigm. It is probable that if decision makers perceive the decision making process used by external providers as being rational, that they will perceive the internal decision making process as being rational, also.

If strategic decision makers choose to use a rational approach to the internal management of the organization, then they will choose a method such as "Zero-Base Budgeting", or "Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems". Such a method allows one to identify and rank organizational

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objectives and then eliminate those programs which contribute least to the top-ranked objectives. Decision makers may involve the participation of others in the decision making process if they perceive they have insufficient power. Decision makers may choose a delay strategy if they believe they have insufficient information on which to base cutback decisions. In that case, decisions will be postponed until adequate data is gathered.

Internal strategies based on a political paradigm.

Which particular strategies are chosen if decision makers accept the political paradigm, is affected by their perceptions of their relative power vis a vis other elements in the organization. Passivity occurs if top management believes it has low power vis a vis the funding agency and must simply pass along the cuts as dictated by the funding agency. Abdication, shifting the responsibility for deciding on cuts to others, is often chosen if top management believes it politically risky to make the decisions because of potentially negative outcomes. An across the board strategy for making cuts or one of delay will be chosen if decision makers perceive they are unable to placate a variety of powerful interest groups, or if they wish to avoid conflict within the organization. Severe cuts to the weakest units or to important programs as a threat to the external funding source will be the chosen strategy if decision makers perceive their power position as being high

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Crisis Syndrome Behavior

How the rest of the organization responds to the strategic decision responses made by the organization's dominant coalition is a function of the crisis like properties of those responses, that is of the cutbacks in organizational activities. Hermann (1969) has defined a crisis as a situation that threatens important goals (that is, severity) and which occurs suddenly with little response time available (that is, time pressure). If organizational members perceive cutbacks as having crisis like qualities, their responses tend to follow a pattern of initial shock (numbed inaction) followed by defensive retreat (denial, refusal to change). These responses Jick and Murray have labelled the "crisis syndrome." In organizations, the crisis syndrome results in withdrawal behavior (reduced productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover); increased interorganizational conflict; reduction in communication channels; centralization; and lowered performance standards (Hermann, 1963). Organizational members' perceptions regarding the crisis like properties of cutbacks are influenced by the "objective" crisis properties of cutbacks as well as by certain organizational and contextual conditions. These conditions include:

1. The extent to which the organization is connected to an interorganizational network and the extent to which the

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cutbacks are part of a general trend since both these aspects affect the level of "surprise."

2. Personality characteristics of decision makers. Those who are inexperienced in making budget cuts and/or have Type A personalities are more likely to perceive cutbacks as crises.

3. Goal clarity and centralization of authority. Both factors affect the perception of warning signs.

Organizational Effectiveness and Quality of Work Life

The long run effect of strategic decision responses and crisis syndrome behavior is a reduction in the quality of an organization's service or product and the quality of work-life of its members. This variable, in turn, has a negative effect on the strategic decision response and crisis syndrome behavior variables.

Zammuto and Cameron

Zammuto and Cameron's Typology of Environmental Decline and Organizational Response (1983) is perhaps the most comprehensive model. It applies to both the private and public sectors and encompasses environmental changes as well as organizational responses. In their paper, Zammuto and Cameron assume that decline is a multi dimensional phenomenon which most often is a product of the environment rather than the organization. Thus, "decline is better conceptualized as environmental decline and organizational

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response" (p. 3).

Two types of environmental change can lead to decline:

1. A reduction in the size of the niche due to declining availability of resources within the niche, a declining level of demand for goods or services and/or an increase in constraints that prevent certain activities.

2. A change in the shape of the niche, which results in a change in the type of organizational performance the niche will support. It is due to technological changes or a change in customer preferences.

In addition to the two types of niche changes which can occur, size and shape, there are two possible patterns of change in niche configuration. The pattern of change may be continuous or discontinuous. A continuous change is one that is consistent with past experience while a discontinuous change is one that is a significant deviation from the past. Organizations have more opportunity to adapt to change which is continuous than to that which is discontinuous. Therefore, organizations are often affected differently by environmental decline, depending on the pattern of change.

Their typology of environmental decline is based on the two types of change in niche configuration, size and shape, and on the two patterns of change, continuous and discontinuous (see Figure 5). Four types of environmental decline: erosion, contraction, dissolution and collapse, can occur as a result of the four different combinations of the

<u>Continuity of Environmental Change</u>		
<u>Type of Change in Niche Configuration</u>	<u>Continuous Change</u>	<u>Discontinuous Change</u>
Niche Size	Erosion	Contraction
Niche Shape	Dissolution	Collapse

Figure 5

A Typology of Environmental Decline

Note. From "A Typology of Environmental Decline and Organizational Response" by R. Zamuto and K. Cameron, 1983, p.50. Copyright 1983 by R.Zamuto and K. Cameron. Reprinted by permission.

two variables.

Looking at the organizational level of analysis, Zammuto and Cameron describe two types of organizational responses to decline: structural adjustments and strategic responses. Structural adjustments are internal changes in the arrangements and methods of operation. They may vary in scope from small or incremental changes to major or complete realignments. There are also different types of adjustments that might be made. They are: change by deletion (eliminating activities), change by substitution (replacing activities), change by addition (increasing activities) and change by distribution (relocating activities).

Strategic responses focus on the environment outside the organization and are an attempt to affect the major domains in which the organization operates. The five types of strategic responses available to an organization are:

1. Domain defense: preserving the legitimacy of a current domain by generating coalitions of support among key resource providers.

2. Domain offense: generating organizational slack by expanding the current level of an activity that an organization does well.

3. Domain consolidation: reducing the size of a domain by eliminating peripheral activities.

4. Domain creation: supplementing current domains with completely new domains.

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5. Domain substitution: replacing one domain with another.

The appropriate strategic response will vary, depending not only on the type of environmental decline experienced, but also on whether or not the decline was predicted in advance (see Figure 6).

Zammuto and Cameron maintain that while organizations may utilize a variety of responses to decline, which of the structural adjustments and strategic responses used by the organization are effective in enhancing organizational viability depends on the type of environmental decline they are experiencing.

Summary

While the literature initially spoke of declining organizations (Argenti, 1976; Levine, 1978; Whetten, 1980), organizational theorists and researchers (Jick and Murray, 1982; Levine, 1981) have come to accept Zammuto and Cameron's (1983) environment - focused, multidimensional conceptualization of decline. Typically, decline is defined as a change in the organization's environment, more specifically, a reduction in resources due to shrinking or changing markets.

Organizations may respond to a declining environment by making structural adjustments or strategic responses (Zammuto and Cameron, 1983). Structural adjustments are

Type of Change in
Niche Coefficients

Continuity of Environmental Change

<u>Type of Change in Niche Configuration</u>		<u>Continuity of Environmental Change</u>	
		<u>Continuous Change</u>	<u>Discontinuous Change</u>
Niche Size	EROSION	CONTRACTION	
	<u>Structural Adjustments</u>	<u>Structural adjustments</u>	
	* Change by redistribution	* Change by deletion	
	* Small, incremental changes (fine-tuning)	* Substantial across-the-board or selective cutbacks	
	<u>Strategic Responses</u>	<u>Strategic Responses</u>	
	* Predicted: Domain offense	* Predicted: Domain defense	
	* Not Predicted: Domain consolidation	* Not Predicted: Domain consolidation	

Figure 6

Organizational Level Responses to Environmental Decline

Note. From "A Typology of Environmental Decline and Organizational Response" by R. Zammuto and K. Cameron, 1983, p.52. Copyright 1983 by R. Zammuto and K. Cameron. Reprinted by permission.

Continuity of Environmental Change

Type of Change in

<u>Continuity of Environmental Change</u>	
<u>Type of Change in Niche Configuration</u>	
Continuous Change	Discontinuous Change
DISSOLUTION	
COLLAPSE	
<u>Structural Adjustments</u>	<u>Structural Adjustments</u>
* Change by addition	* Change by substitution
* Search for new alternatives	* Trial-and-error search for past solutions
<u>Strategic Responses</u>	<u>Strategic Responses</u>
* Predicted: Domain defense, then domain creation	* Predicted: Domain creation
* Not Predicted: Domain substitution	* Not Predicted: Domain substitution

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Figure 6 (cont'd.)

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attempts to change the organization's structure and methods of operation. Strategic responses are attempts to change the major domains in which the organization operates. These strategic responses are directed at the environment and include domain consolidation, defense, offense, creation and substitution. As with structural adjustments, the effectiveness of the strategic response selected depends upon the type of environmental decline being experienced by the organization (Zammuto and Cameron, 1983).

Zammuto and Cameron describe effective responses as being those that "enhance organizational viability". Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) view an effective organization as being one that satisfies the demands of those organizations in the environment from which it requires support in order to survive. According to Pfeffer and Salancik, organizational effectiveness is multi-faceted since it is an external standard of how well an organization is doing in meeting the criteria for organizational performance subscribed to by various groups and organizations concerned with its activities. Since each group or organization will have its own criteria, the demands placed upon the organization and the estimates of organizational effectiveness will vary. The extent to which a particular group's or organization's evaluation of the organization's performance is important to the organization depends upon the degree of control that group or organization has over resources that are critical

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The groups or organizations which control organizational resources may be either constituents, whose members cluster around shared interests (Pennings and Goodman, 1977) or coalitions, whose members share some common goals but have dissimilar interests (Wagner and Schneider, 1983). Constituent groups are concerned with the activities of the focal organization and may exist both inside and outside the organization. While the focus of this study is on constituent evaluations of organizational effectiveness, it is recognized that constituent groups may attempt to form coalitions in order to increase their influence over the organization.

Levine (1981) also recognizes the importance of constituent groups. In his model, he refers to them as interest groups, which affect the formal authority structure, environmental changes in resource levels and administrative responses. The political literature, as a whole, tends to reflect the perspective that the effective management of decline requires not only a rational management approach but also an understanding of the political process involved.

While Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) focus on the external control of organizations, Jick and Murray (1982) include the response of the rest of the organization's members to top management's decisions as an important part of their model.

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Internal coalitions and constituencies would also be expected to exert control over organizational responses (Cyert and March, 1963).

Jick and Murray also suggest that the perceptions of organization members have an important impact on organization and constituent responses. "The subjective interpretations of a cutback and the conditions surrounding it are critical in understanding the pattern of responses" (Jick and Murray, 1982, p. 165). Thus some measure of the critical perceptions and attitudes held by the dominant coalition of the organization and a sample of the perceptions and attitudes of those whose "crisis syndrome" behavior one wishes to study must be obtained.

Integrative Model

A general, integrative model which incorporates elements from each of the individual models can be seen in Figure 7.

Variables and Their Relationships

Environmental decline is a change in the size or shape of the organization's niche. (A niche is a sub-unit of the environment, within which the organization exists (Zammuto and Cameron, 1982).) The change may be caused by declining availability of resources within the niche, a declining level of demand for goods or services, an increase in

Interest
Groups



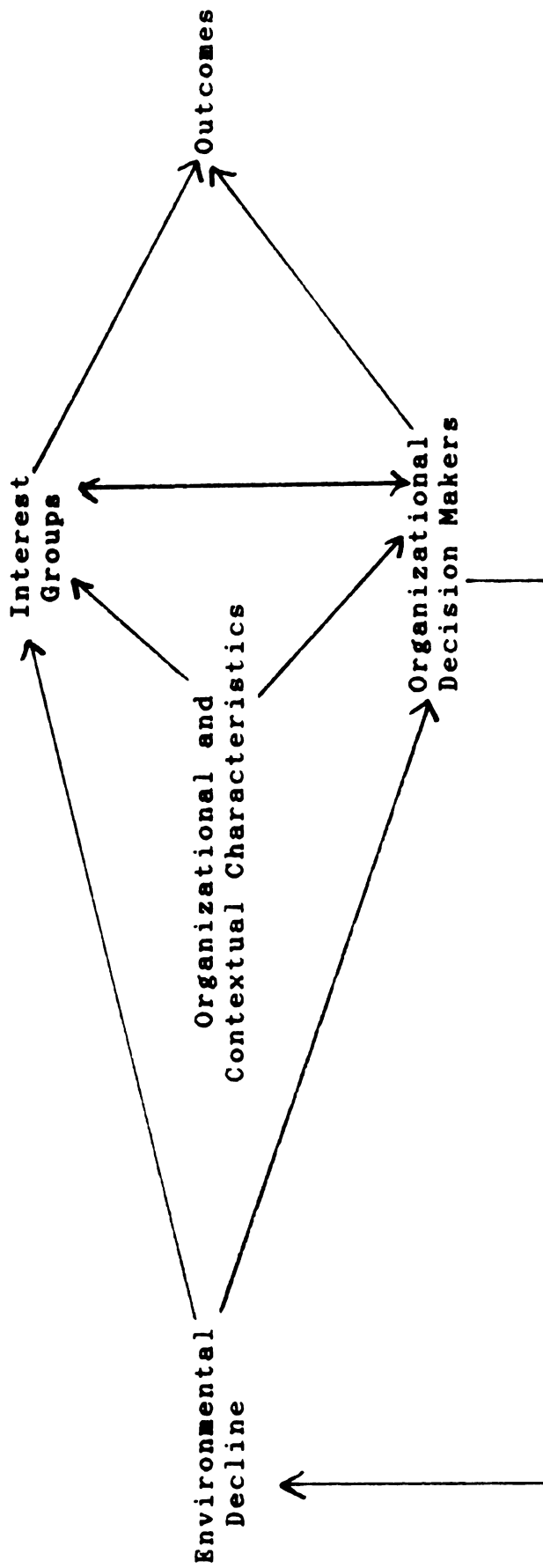


Figure 7
Integrative Model

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constraints that prevent certain activities, technological changes and/or changes in customer preferences for products or services. Important characteristics of environmental decline which influence the responses of decision makers in organizations and interest groups include the decision making paradigm used by resource providers and the degree of continuity of change in the niche (Jick and Murray, 1982; Zammuto and Cameron, 1983).

Organizational decision makers choose external decision responses which are attempts to influence the organization's environment and internal decision responses which are directed at the organization's structure. The choice of a particular response is influenced by the decision makers' perceptions regarding (a) the causes of the decline, (b) the decision making process used by outside funding sources, (c) their power vis a vis other interested parties, (d) the demands of interest groups, and (e) the type of decline being experienced by the organization (Jick and Murray, 1982; Levine, 1978 and 1981; Zammuto and Cameron, 1983).

Interest groups may be external or internal to the organization. Members of interest groups react to external and internal responses chosen by organizational decision makers. Their reactions are influenced by (a) the perceived crisis properties of the decision responses (time pressure and severity) and (b) perceived characteristics of the decline itself (Jick and Murray, 1982; Levine, 1981).

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Organizational and contextual characteristics include the following:

1. Interest group structure, that is, the presence or absence of interest groups, their activity level, and whether they act individually or in coalitions.
2. Formal authority structure, that is, the scope and amount of legal power held by the organization's decision makers.
3. Nature of social values surrounding the organization's function.
4. Critical aspects of personalities of the key actors in the situation.
5. Decision making process used by the funding agency (rational or political).
6. Politization of the environment.

Decision makers' perceptions of their power vis a vis other groups and group members' perceptions concerning the crisis properties of cutbacks are both affected by organizational and contextual characteristics (Jick and Murray, 1982; Levine, 1981).

Outcomes include possible changes in the distribution of power among interest groups, the quality of life of organizational members and the rest of the community, the organization's viability and the organization's effectiveness in providing a service or product. The outcomes are both influenced by and, in turn, have an

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impact on, interest group responses and strategic decision responses (Jick and Murray, 1982; Levine, 1981; Zammuto and Cameron, 1983).

Problems

A number of problems were encountered in attempting to develop the integrative model because of the different approaches taken by Jick and Murray, Levine, and Zammuto and Cameron in conceptualizing decline.

While Levine (1978) initially described decline as having both external and internal causes, in his 1981 model he defines decline as a reduction in organization revenues. Zammuto and Cameron (1982, 1983) view decline as being strictly an external phenomenon. The type of environmental decline an organization experiences, however, may be a function of not only a reduction in the organization's niche but a change in the shape of the niche, as well. Thus, an organization may experience a decrease in revenues in its present niche, but there may also be an opportunity for an organization to off-set this reduction by expanding in other areas. Jick and Murray limit their discussion of decline causes to reductions in funding levels and the decision making processes used by funding agencies.

Zammuto and Cameron (1982, 1983) focus on the rational matching of organizational responses with the type of environmental decline being experienced. They do not consider two possible constraints on the implementation of

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the organization's responses to decline: interest group demands and the power situation.

The author attempted to overcome these problems by making the model general enough to include the special cases developed by some of the theorists. One exception to this approach was the conceptualization of decline. Since Levine did not include organizational causes of decline in his 1981 model, the author limited the causes of decline to the external environment in the integrative model.

While the integrative model and the various individual models describe some variables that are factors in the phenomenon of decline, the models fail to explain the process whereby an organization's decision makers manage external and internal constituent groups within a declining environment. In order to understand the process, one must look at two levels (units) of analysis: the group or organizational level and the individual level. At the group or organizational level, one needs to ask the following questions:

1. How do organizational decision makers identify and respond to the decline phenomenon, and what factors appear to influence that process?

2. In what ways do external and internal constituent groups identify and react to the decline responses chosen by the dominant coalition, and why?

3. How does the dominant coalition manage the resulting

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At the individual level, one needs to ask: What is the sense making process used by members of the dominant coalition and of constituent groups as they identify and experience the decline phenomenon? As Jick and Murray suggest, "it is how the actors in a situation define and interpret reality which is critical in determining their actions or decision choices" (Jick and Murray, 1982, p.146).

Research Design

A two year longitudinal study of a school district that was experiencing environmental decline was conducted. The qualitative research methods of participant observation, interviewing and the review of archival data were used.

In recent years, there has been a growing realization among some organizational theorists that we need to use new approaches in studying organizations (Van Maanen, 1982). This realization has grown out of a disenchantment with the ability of purely quantitative research techniques to answer the important questions facing us today (Pondy and Mitroff, 1979; Van Maanen, 1982). As Hackman observed in the preface to Varieties of Qualitative Research (Van Maanen, 1982), one of those questions is, "How can organizations become leaner (and in many cases, smaller) as the birthrate and the rate

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There is an increased interest in discovering the underlying meanings that organizational members attach to the events and activities of which they are a part (Van Maanen, 1982). If one envisions organizations as being social constructs, instead of entities with objective characteristics, then one needs to develop ways of tapping the sense making process used by members of those organizations (Pondy and Mitroff, 1979).

Silverman (1971), in arguing for the Action Theory approach to the study of organizations, postulated that it is not enough to merely observe behaviors. If the observer does not know the significance or the meaning the actors attribute to the behavior, it will not be possible to predict how others will react to that behavior. Therefore, one must try to capture the meanings of behaviors as well as the behaviors themselves. Qualitative research techniques are especially appropriate for discovering the meanings or sense making process of individuals (Becker, 1969; Pondy and Mitroff, 1979; Van Maanen, 1982; Wolcott, 1975).

Weick (1969) has suggested that individuals' cognitive processes (that is, how people make sense out of past experiences) can be captured by using causal mapping techniques. Whetten (1980) has recommended that this "causal mapping" method, used by Bougon, Weick and Binkjorst (1977) in their study of the sense making process employed by

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members of a jazz orchestra, be utilized to trace the sense making process used by members of organizations that are experiencing decline.

Although several models have been proposed in the literature, as already indicated, grounded research on the process of decline is necessary. That is, while some of the important variables are known (environmental decline, organizational decision makers and interest groups), it is not clear from the literature how these variables interact with each other nor what factors influence those interactions. Grounded research in an organization experiencing decline was conducted over a two year period in an attempt to generate some hypotheses related to the management of interest (constituent) groups in a declining environment. The use of qualitative research methods enabled the researcher to develop grounded theory. ["Grounded" theory is that which emerges from the data and is tested by new data, Glaser and Strauss (1967).] Jick and Murray (1982) call for longitudinal research in organizations experiencing decline using a triangulation of methodologies: observation, survey, unobtrusive, archival and others. They also suggest that retrospective case studies which reconstruct events surrounding cutback decisions would be helpful since our understanding of the subject of decline is still largely tentative. Whetten (1980) also stresses the need for case studies of

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organizational responses to decline as there is a need to know more about what factors influence management's choice between alternative responses to decline.

Methodology

Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research includes the techniques of participant observation, formal and informal interviewing, survey questionnaires, and the review of documentary material (Glasser and Strauss, 1969; Schatzman and Strauss, 1973; Van Maanen, 1982). Regardless of the specific techniques chosen, qualitative research has the following characteristics (Van Maanen, 1982):

1. Analytic induction. Detailed observations form the researcher's data base which is then analyzed for patterns. Ideally, one should not approach the data with a specific theoretical model in mind. Rather, a specific model should emerge from the data.

2. Descriptive focus. The emphasis should be on describing "what is going on" and the participants' interpretations of the meaning of activities, rather than on predicting. A researcher might assume the perspective of an "insider" in order to capture that meaning. An insider enters the world of the studied and describes the meanings the people of that world attach to activities and events.

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3. Structure as ritual constraint. Rather than focusing on the structure, per se, the observer tries to understand how the structure acts as a constraint on individual behavior. It is part of the context within which individuals act. The researcher tries to capture the meaning and context of organizational activities.

Generating Grounded Theory

Glaser and Strauss (1967) believe that too much emphasis has been placed on verifying theory as opposed to generating theory. While they do not rule out the use of quantitative techniques in generating theory, they do believe that qualitative research has been neglected. They propose comparative analysis as a major strategy to use in developing grounded theory.

The generation of grounded theory requires that data be collected, coded and analyzed simultaneously because theory emerges as data are analyzed, and it is this theory that guides future data collection and analysis. The elements of the emerging theory are conceptual categories and their properties as well as the hypothesized relationships among those categories and their properties. An integrating scheme which links the individual hypotheses emerges from the data during the process.

The comparative analysis technique requires one to sample various comparison groups (individuals or aggregates

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of individuals) in such a way that a complete description of the important categories and their relationships to each other results. Therefore, similar as well as diverse groups should be chosen. At the outset, it is not known how many groups or which groups need to be sampled since this is guided by the emerging theory. The sampling does not need to be random since the focus is on the direction of hypothesized relationships, not on their strength. The techniques to be used in gathering the data from the various comparison groups should be those that are most effective in providing the information desired within the constraints of the situation.

Glaser and Strauss describe four stages in their "constant comparative method of qualitative analysis".

1. Code incidents observed by comparing them with other incidents in the same category and with those incidents in different categories. Write a memo on any theoretical ideas that occur during the process.

2. Integrate categories and their properties. This integration will emerge from the data if the researcher has simultaneously collected, coded and analyzed the data.

3. Delimit the theory. As the theory emerges and solidifies fewer categories will be relevant than first thought.

4. Write the theory by collating the memos one has written on each category and returning to the coded data

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Data Collection

The methods of data collection were participant observation, formal and informal interviewing and the review of archives. These methods of qualitative research were appropriate for addressing the research questions described earlier.

Participant observation

When using the technique of participant observation, entering an organization consists of two important aspects: choosing the "right" organization and then negotiating entry. The "right" organization is one that is suitable, given the purpose of your research and feasible, given your resources (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973). The chosen organization meets these requirements.

Choosing a setting. The organization chosen for this study was a Michigan public school district. Declining enrollment has been characteristic of Michigan public schools for over twenty years, following a peak in the birthrate in 1957 (Hecker, 1982). Reduced enrollments have been followed by decreases in the size of staff, programs and in some districts, the size of budgets and fund balances. More recently, many school districts have found it necessary to close schools because they could not afford to maintain empty classrooms.

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The specific site chosen to collect data was a local public school district which had been experiencing both declining enrollment and declining state financial support. The combination of these two factors had forced the school district to cut programs and/or staff for several years and eventually to close an elementary school.

Negotiating entering. Access to the organization as a participant observer was gained by running for election to the Board of Education of the particular school district of interest. Since board members make the final decisions regarding the expenditure of funds, staffing and curriculum, this was an appropriate position to seek. Also, as a board member one has access to other board members, members of the administration, members of the community and archival data. One drawback to this position is the barrier that exists between board members and some teachers. It was more difficult as a board member to negotiate access to data controlled by teachers, such as their sense making processes.

As Schatzman and Strauss have indicated, negotiating entry is a continuous process throughout the time the researcher is conducting the study. One must not only continue to negotiate entry with new persons as one moves about in the organization, one must also maintain rapport with those people in the organization with whom one has already negotiated entry. Good interpersonal skills are

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essential if the researcher is going to gain access to meaningful data.

Getting organized. Getting organized is enhanced by an initial mapping of the social, spatial and temporal relationships within the organization. The process of collecting data for these maps gives one an overview of the organization and provides opportunities to meet organization members. Selective sampling of the organization follows the initial mapping process. Initially, the sampling is guided by the time, interest and theoretical framework of the researcher as well as by organizational constraints. Eventually, sampling is guided by the emerging theory and the ability of the researcher to reduce any initial constraints (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

Watching. According to Schatzman and Strauss, watching depends upon the researcher's awareness of and ability to capitalize on his/her own sensitivity. Since sensitivity tends to decrease with familiarity, it is important to enhance that sensitivity by:

1. Recording first impressions before they become an unnoticed part of the background.
 2. Working in different sites simultaneously.
 3. Being alert to those situations that did not turn out the way you expected.
 4. Capitalizing on sensitivities from past experience.
- What the observer chooses to watch changes over time.

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At the beginning, when one does not know what is important, one tends to observe what ever presents itself. Later, one's observations are guided by the sampling plan, the need for multiple perspectives, the emerging theoretical framework and the need to verify hypotheses which have emerged from earlier data.

There are a variety of types of "watching" that are available to the field researcher, from "passive presence" where the observer does not interact with the participants to "participation with hidden identity". Midway between those types is the "participant observer" who is a full participant in the organization and whose identity as a researcher is known. The advantage of this type of watching is that the researcher has increased access to situations, information, people and the meanings members attach to their activities. As a participating member in the organization, the observer has an opportunity to gain valuable insights. The disadvantages are that one is not as free to move around in the organization, and there is a greater danger of "going native". That is, one is more likely to adopt the view points prevalent among organization members and to be insensitive to the hypothesized relationships in the situation.

As a participant observer, the author observed and recorded organizational decisions made in response to declining enrollments and decreasing finances as well as the

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sense making process used by board members. The latter were gathered in the form of causal mappings as a result of informal and formal interviewing, situational conversations and volunteered information.

Listening. The purpose of listening is to discover the "ises" and "because" of organizational members. It assists the researcher in tapping the sense making processes of individual members. This can be done by:

1. Listening systematically, that is, trying to understand a particular situation from a particular person's point of view.

2. Using comparative analysis. What does this person say about a situation compared to what others have said.

3. Analyzing what was said in relation to the initial and developing theoretical framework.

Listening can take the form of eavesdropping, situational conversations, interviewing, and host volunteered information (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

Careful listening and watching enabled the researcher to understand the effects of organizational responses to environmental decline on organizational effectiveness, from the constituent's point of view. That is, the effects of decline related decisions on organizational effectiveness were measured by examining the issue from the perspectives of the community, the administration and the teachers. Again, the techniques of participant observation,

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interviewing and the use of archival data such as minutes of meetings, newspaper accounts, correspondence and letters to the editor were utilized to gather the data.

Recording the data. A strategy for recording the data is essential if the researcher is going to be able to retrieve and analyze information. Schatzman and Strauss suggest the following model, although other researchers might use other techniques.

1. Make initial notes while on the scene or as soon after as possible, given the constraints of the situation.

2. Re-write these initial jottings so that they will still be understandable months later. Include a description of the context of the situation.

3. Record three types of notes, labeling them as such,

- a. observational notes (ON), which consist of who said or did what under stated circumstances.

- b. theoretical notes (TN), which are attempts to derive meaning from one or more observational notes.

- c. methodological notes (MN), which are reminders or instructions to oneself about the methodological process.

4. Package these different types of notes so that each one deals with only one incident, inference or tactical decision. This, plus the use of headings and subheadings makes retrieval, scanning and comprehension much easier.

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6. Keep a separate file of interview data.

7. Prepare analytic memos, which are longer than theoretical notes, during the data collection and coding process. These memos form the core of future publications.

Data Analysis

The analysis of data should take place during data collection as well as afterwards since the analysis influences future data collection. The analytic process consists of discovering significant classes, their properties and their linkages. Ideally, a key linkage or model will emerge which will guide future analysis and data collection. While it is best to discover linkages from the data, one may use conceptual levers to interrogate the data, if necessary. A conceptual lever is a thinking device that provides distance from and a new perspective on data. Substantive levers, that is, models, concepts and theories from one's own discipline may help one to see classes, their properties and possible linkages. Logical levers, such as comparisons and analogical thinking may also be helpful (Schatzman and Strauss, 1973).

The data was analyzed during the data collection period to the extent of recording the author's own interpretation of what was being observed. That is, theoretical notes, which are attempts to derive meaning from one or more observational notes, were recorded. More extensive analysis

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followed after the collection of data had been completed.

At that time, using a technique suggested by Bogdan and Biklen (1982), the author:

1. Read over the data looking for appropriate coding categories and relationships among them. While this process was guided by the purpose of the study, types of coding categories considered included:

- a. Setting or context: general information on the setting, topic or subjects.

- b. Perspectives: views held by subjects on the setting, topic, other people or objects.

- c. Process: changes in the organization or subjects over time.

- d. Activities: regularly occurring behaviors.

- e. Events: infrequent happenings.

- f. Strategies: ways people accomplished things.

- g. Relationships and social structures: friends, enemies, coalitions, social roles and role sets.

2. Read the data a second time and assigned a particular unit of data to the appropriate coding categories.

3. Discovered possible linkages among the categories by tracing events through time.

4. Used theories and models from the organization behavior/organization theory literature as conceptual levers, that is, as perspectives from which to view the

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data. The use of the integrative model (see Figure 7) as a conceptual lever helped the author to discover underlying patterns or models in the data.

5. Wrote analytical memos which reflected the literature and the underlying patterns or models which emerged from the data.

In addition, the author used the causal mapping technique (Maruyama, 1963; Weick, 1969) to trace the sense making process employed by members of top management and constituent groups. The technique is a tool for discovering perceived relationships among variables within and outside an organization. Individual members were asked to describe the causes and results of particular events. This data was used to draw causal loops which may be deviation amplifying or deviation counter-acting. Deviation amplifying loops have an even number of negative signs and are unstable (see Figure 8). Once events begin to go in a particular direction, they will continue in that direction until the system is destroyed or until some outside event takes place. Deviation counter-acting loops have an odd number of negative signs and are stable or self-regulating (see Figure 9). Negative signs indicate that a change in one variable is accompanied by a change in the opposite direction of the accompanying variable. Positive signs indicate that the two variables change in the same direction.

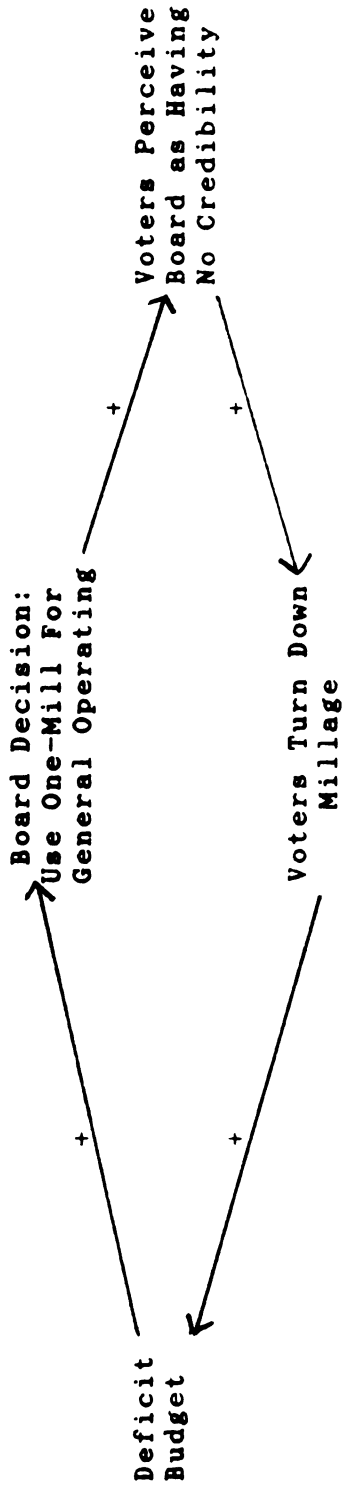


Figure 8

Deviation Amplifying Loops

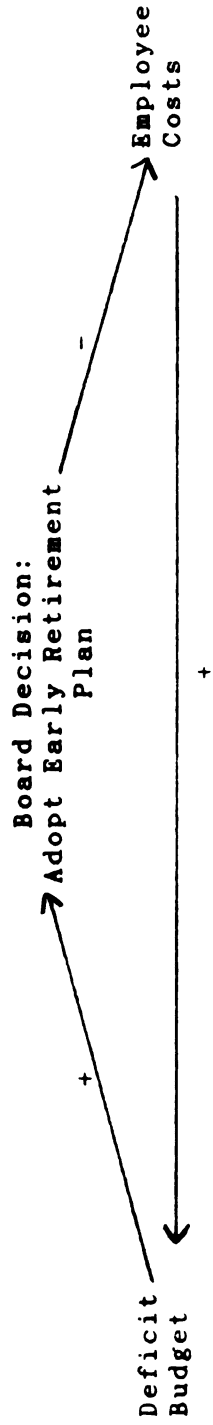


Figure 9
Deviation Counter-Acting Loops

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Reporting the Findings

How one communicates the data to others depends upon the audience one chooses since that will influence what is included in the story and how it is told. The credibility of the research is an important issue at this point. The researcher must be confident that the theory is grounded in data, that it has been checked against the data and that it is logically consistent. The researcher's belief in the credibility of the research can be conveyed to others by including an explanation of the theoretical framework and a meaningful description of the data, such as, interviews, quotes and a narrative of who was studied, how and why. Describing the codified procedure used in analyzing the data is also helpful in convincing the reader of the credibility of the research.

Methodological Issues

Validity and reliability can be increased by using triangulation. According to Jick (1979), there are two types of triangulation: across-methods and within-methods. Across-methods triangulation is the use of more than one method to collect data about the same phenomenon. This results in convergent validation and can be used to test the degree of external validity. Within-methods uses a comparison of multiple groups to get internal consistency and reliability. Triangulation is based on the assumption

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that the use of multiple methods cancels out the weaknesses of each method. It can also be used to capture a more complete or holistic portrayal of the phenomenon under study by examining the subject from multiple perspectives.

Problems

Being both a participant and an observer constrains one's ability to play each role effectively. Some behaviors which would be appropriate for an observer, such as unrestricted note taking and asking unlimited questions, would be considered inappropriate for a participant. However, being a participant in the organization provides access that would probably not be available to a researcher who was only an observer. This problem was partly overcome by "de-briefing" at the first opportunity, writing down observations and personal interpretations of them as soon after the incident as possible, given the constraints of the situation.

The longer a person is a participant in an organization, the more likely s/he is to adopt the perspectives of the observed. While this is helpful in capturing the meaning that various actions have for organizational members, it does make it more difficult to see the underlying themes and linkages in the data.

The researcher tried to prevent this loss of sensitivity by using the comparative analysis technique

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described by Glaser and Strauss (1967). That is , the author was alert to how problems of decline are handled in other organizations (school districts, universities, hospitals and business organizations). By reading newspapers and magazines and by talking with people from other school districts and organizations that are experiencing decline, one can see the similarities and differences between other organizations and the one being studied. This would be an approximation of the method for enhancing sensitivity suggested by Schatzman and Strauss (1973), working in different sites simultaneously.

Summary

The integrative model and the literature it represents indicate that a longitudinal study of a single organization which has experienced decline over a number of years would be a valuable addition to existing research. Further, the study should be conducted in an organization where data on: the responses of the organization and constituent groups, the sense making process of individual members of top management and of constituent groups, and constituent perceptions of organizational effectiveness would be available. The organization chosen, a Michigan school district, met those criteria.

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observation, interviewing and the review of archival data were selected as appropriate techniques for gaining access to the data. Participant observation was chosen since that method gives the researcher access to situations, information, people and the meanings members attach to their activities. Election to the school board was sought as a means of entering the organization. Since board members make the final decisions regarding the expenditure of funds, staffing and curriculum, this was an appropriate position to seek.

Interviewing, informal conversations and the review of archival data were used to tap the sense making process used by members of the dominant coalition (the seven school board members) and constituent groups (employee unions and community groups). The causal mapping technique (Maruyama, 1963; Weick 1969, 1977) was used to determine the perceived causes and effects of organizational responses to decline as represented by board decisions.

Qualitative research methods are especially appropriate for discovering the meanings or sense making process of individuals (Becker, 1969; Pondy and Mitroff, 1979; Van Maanen, 1982; Wolcott, 1975). Whetten (1980) has recommended that the causal mapping techniques developed by Maruyama (1963) and Weick (1969, 1977) be utilized to trace the sense making process used by members of organizations that are experiencing decline.

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Initial data sampling was guided by the integrative model and the tentative research questions. Later, sampling was guided by the emerging theoretical framework, the need for multiple perspectives and the need to verify hypotheses which had emerged from earlier data.

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CHAPTER TWO

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Setting

The organization chosen for this study is a Michigan public school district, which has been experiencing declining enrollment and inadequate financial support. Declining enrollment has been characteristic of Michigan public schools for over twenty years, following a peak in the birth rate in 1957 (Hecker, 1982). Reduced enrollments have been followed by decreases in the size of staff, programs and in some districts, the size of budgets and fund balances. Additionally, many school districts have found it necessary to close schools because they could not afford to maintain empty classrooms.

Funding

School revenues come primarily from two sources: state aid which is appropriated by vote of the state legislature and local property taxes which are voted by registered voters who reside within the school district. The level of state aid to local schools is a function of three factors: state revenues, other needs for state funds and student

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enrollment. During the period of this study, state revenues were at a reduced level because Michigan's automobile industry was not doing well. Since car sales were down, the state unemployment rate was high and the need for social services was increased. Thus, fewer funds were available for education ("Headlines", August 10, 1982 and August 24, 1982).

State aid is provided to those school districts whose state equalized valuation of the property located in their district is below a specified level. The funding is based on the number of students enrolled in school on the fourth Friday in September. Thus, a school district which was experiencing a declining enrollment had an especially difficult time. Not only were there fewer state funds available for education than there had been in past years, the district whose enrollment had declined, received a smaller share of those funds than they had previously. Since costs did not fall as rapidly as enrollment, local school boards had to try to shift some of the financial burden to the local taxpayer.

The state constitution allows counties to levy up to 15 mills in property taxes without a vote of the people. That 15 mills is divided up among local school districts, the county, townships and the intermediate school district. The local schools usually get seven to eight mills. Since school districts need more funds than that millage rate will

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generate, local residents are asked to vote for additional millage.

Board of Education

The authority structure of a local school district is determined by state law. The registered voters residing within the geographic boundaries of the school district vote for school board members at an annual election in June. A member's term is four years.

Board members are accountable to the local voters, who may vote them out of office when their term expires. Board members may also be removed from office by a special recall process. Recall petitions must be signed by a specified number of registered voters for an election to take place. The required number is equal to 20% of the number of people who voted in the last election for governor. If enough signatures are obtained and if the wording of the petitions is approved, the election is held and the person may be voted out of office. Members are also responsible to the state and must follow the state school code as well as a variety of laws which govern relationships with employees, students and the community.

The board of education's role is to determine school policy, and to hire a superintendent who is held accountable for the administration of board policy. School policy is broadly defined as including not only specific policies, but

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also district goals, major personnel actions, curriculum and annual budgets. In addition, the board serves as an appeal board that hears employee grievances and student disciplinary appeals. The superintendent's role is to administer the school district within the framework of school policy and state law. Administration of the district includes the hiring, assignment, evaluation and release of all other school personnel. The board plays a role in personnel action since it hears grievances carried beyond the superintendent level and must formally approve the hiring, lay off and termination of all employees.

The board acts by making decisions at public meetings. According to the Open Meetings Act, it may not meet in closed session except under very limited circumstances. Individual board members do not have the authority to direct the administration nor to make decisions involving the district unless that authority is specifically delegated to them by board action.

Relationships with Employed Staff

In Michigan, public school teachers were granted the right to form unions under the Public Employment Relations Act (PERA) in 1965. The law requires employers to bargain hours, wages and working conditions in good faith with its unionized employees. While strikes by public employees are against the law in Michigan, there are many teacher strikes

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each year. Boards of education have the right to obtain a court injunction against striking teachers and/or to fire them.

Unions have the exclusive right to represent employees within a given bargaining unit, whether or not the employees are members of the union. At the same time, the union has the duty to represent those employees by supporting employee grievances if there is a basis for them. Most teacher unions in Michigan have negotiated a union shop. That is, teachers must join the union and pay union dues within a specified period of time after they are hired. Most contracts provide for a grievance procedure whereby individual employees and/or the union may appeal management's day to day administration of the contract. A hearing by the board of education is usually the final step in the process. If the union does not agree with the board's disposition of the grievance, it may take the matter to arbitration. Either party may appeal the arbitrator's decision through the courts.

Site

The specific site chosen to collect data was the Eureka public school district which includes a small college town, an unincorporated village and surrounding rural areas. (The names of all people and places have been changed to protect

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their anonymity.) The total area of the district is 144 square miles. When the study began in July 1981, kindergarten through twelfth grade enrollment was 4,169 students. There were seven elementary schools (grades kindergarten through six), one intermediate school (grades seven and eight) and one high school (grades nine through twelve) as indicated on the map shown in Figure 10. The district had been experiencing environmental decline, a change in the size and shape of its niche, since 1979.

Reduction in Size of Niche

A reduction in the size of the school district's niche occurred as a result of the declining availability of financial resources. During the six year period, 1977-78 through 1982-83, state aid dropped from \$2,912,147 to \$1,989,732 a 32% decrease (see Table 1). Over the same period, state aid per student declined from \$629 in 1977-78 to \$521 in 1982-83.

At the same time, the tax burden shifted significantly from the state to the local property taxpayer. State support decreased from 36% of the school district's revenue in 1977-78 to 18% in 1982-83 while local support increased from 54% of the district's total revenue in 1977-78 to 71% in 1982-83 (see Table 1). Local support per pupil (voter approved millage plus allocated millage) increased from \$939 per pupil in 1977-78 to \$2,102 per pupil in 1982-83. This

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Figure 10

Map of Eureka School District

Table 1

State and Local Sources of Revenue

a

<u>Year</u>	<u>State Aid</u>	<u>% of TR</u> ^b	<u>Local Sources</u>	<u>% of TR</u> ^b
1977-78	\$ 2,912,147	36	\$ 4,342,024	54
1978-79	2,981,726	34	4,704,651	54
1979-80	2,991,790	31	5,640,878	58
1980-81	2,482,662	24	6,287,201	62
1981-82	2,455,122	22	7,154,979	66
1982-83	1,989,732	18	8,015,493	71
1983-84	2,347,076	20	8,453,709	70

a Audited Financial Statements, 1978-84.

b District's Total Revenues

increase in local support was primarily due to the rising value of property against which the millage was levied, rather than to increases in the millage rate itself. The district's voter approved millage increased from 24.5 mills in 1977-78 to 28.3 mills in 1983-84 ("Millage Renewal Consideration", January 23, 1984) an increase of only 15.5%. At the same time, local revenues from the property tax increased from \$4,342,024 in 1977-78 to \$8,453,709 in 1983-84, an increase of 95% (see Table 1). Voters were very aware that their taxes were increasing every year, but most did not realize that the state aid formula was written in such a way that as local property taxes increased, state support to the district decreased by an identical amount. Therefore, many were reluctant to vote for millage increase proposals.

The local district experienced varying degrees of success in generating financial support from taxpayers (see Table 2). Over a seven year period, 1977-78 through 1983-84, five millage renewal requests were voted upon and all five passed without difficulty. Millage increase requests did not fare so well, however. A request for a two mill increase failed by 490 votes in March 1979 but passed by 49 votes in June 1979 after a concerted community effort. A proposed 2.7 mill increase failed by 560 votes in August 1980 in spite of the involvement of six employee and citizen task forces. No further attempts were made to increase the millage that

Table 2

Millage Election History

<u>Date</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Type</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Yes Votes</u>	<u>No Votes</u>
June 1978	14 mills	renewal	passed	820	716
Mar 1979	2 mills	increase	failed	1,142	1,632
June 1979	2 mills	increase	passed	2,062	2,013
Nov 1979	7.5 mills	renewal	passed	1,730	920
June 1980	5 mills	renewal	passed	1,644	1,344
Aug 1980	2.7 mills	increase	failed	1,720	2,280
June 1981	1.8 mills	increase	failed	1,609	1,842
Aug 1981	1.8 mills	increase	passed	2,649	1,950
June 1982	1.8 mills	renewal	passed	1,725	1,158
1983	no mills	requested			
June 1984	9.3 mills	renewal	passed	1,286	486

year. In June, 1981, a request for 1.8 mills failed by 233 votes but passed by 699 votes in August of that same year under the leadership of a new superintendent who had joined the district in July. No millage elections were held in 1983. Renewals were not necessary since there were no millages expiring that year. In the preliminary budget, revenues had been projected to exceed expenditures by \$1,064 and so no millage increase was sought. (1983-84 Preliminary Budget, May 16, 1983).

Even though total revenue increased over the period, the district experienced difficult financial straits because revenue increases were not commensurate with the increased cost of living, as measured by the Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, and/or with the increased, contracted salary costs, except in 1983-84 (see Table 3). As a result, in two different years the board was forced to cut programs in order to keep expenditures within available revenues (see Table 4). The 1980-81 and 1981-82 budgets were each cut approximately five percent. The 1981-82 budget cuts were in addition to those which had been made the previous year. That is, those programs which had been eliminated in 1980 were not restored in 1981, rather an additional \$587,000 in program cuts were made.

Table 3

Changes in Revenues, Consumer Price Index and Contracted Salaries

<u>Year</u>	<u>^a % Change, TR</u>	<u>^b % Change, CPI</u>	<u>^c % Change, Salary</u>
1978-79	7.0	9.0	7.0
1979-80	11.0	13.4	8.0
1980-81	5.0	12.5	8.0
1981-82	7.0	8.5	11.6
1982-83	3.0	3.9	7.1
1983-84	10.7	3.3	3.0

^a

Total Revenues, Audited Financial Statements, 1978-84.

^b

Consumer Price Index for Urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers, U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics.

^c

Contracted Salary Increases with Teachers' Union.

Table 4
Budget Cuts Made by Board of Education^a

<u>Decision Date</u>	<u>Amount of Cut</u>	<u>%, Expenditures</u>	<u>Year</u> ^b
Aug 1980	\$ 500,000	4.78	1980-81
Apr 1981	557,000	4.875	1981-82
July 1981	390,000	3.46	1981-82
Aug 1981	360,000	3.2	1981-82
July 1982	22,500	0.2	1982-83
1983	000	0.0	1983-84
1984	000	0.0	1983-84

^a Board of Education Minutes.

^b Budget year affected by decision.

Change in Shape of Niche

In addition to a reduction in the size of the organization's niche, the district also experienced a change in the shape of its niche. The latter was the result of a change in the type of organizational performance the niche would support. In 1978-79, the district's kindergarten through twelfth grade (K-12) student enrollment began to decrease. Between 1978-79 and 1983-84, the district lost 750 students, a decrease of 17% (see Table 5).

Declining enrollment, a state wide phenomenon, resulted from a decrease in the birth rate and outward migration from the state to other parts of the country (Hecker, 1982). The demographic change was intensified by the increasing availability of private schools as alternative educational options. A 1981 study conducted by the administrators of the local school district, for example, showed that of the 330 students lost that year, 235 (71%) had moved out of the district and 59 (18%) had transferred to a parochial school located within the district. The reasons given by parents who had transferred their children were:

1. Parents were uncertain what programming would be available in the public schools in 1981-82, since a 1.8 mill increase proposal had failed in June 1981 and a second attempt was scheduled for late in August, just before the opening of school.

2. Parents were unhappy about the 17 day teacher strike

Table 5
Student Enrollment: Kindergarten Through Twelfth Grade^a

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>%Change</u>
1972-73	4602	+ 26	+ 0.60
1973-74	4628	+ 1	+ 0.02
1974-75	4629	- 38	- 0.80
1975-76	4591	+ 19	+ 0.4
1976-77	4610	+ 15	+ 0.3
1977-78	4625	-122	- 3.0
1978-79	4503	-163	- 4.0
1979-80	4340	-155	- 4.0
1980-81	4186	-311	- 8.0
1981-82	3874	- 60	- 1.5
1982-83	3814 b	- 61	- 1.6
1983-84	3753 b		

^a Recommendation on Future Building Needs, July 19, 1982

^b Fourth Friday Membership Count, 1982, 1983.

which had taken place the previous fall.

The reduction in the number of students had an impact on state aid and on local millage elections. State aid was reduced since it is based on the number of students enrolled in school on the fourth Friday of September. Passing local millage proposals became more of a problem since a decreasing percent of those eligible to vote on the proposals were parents of children in the local school district. A 1983 study conducted by the Center for Government Research at Central Michigan University revealed that less than 40% of the registered voters within the school district were parents and that parents were more knowledgeable than non-parents about the public schools ("School Curriculum: An Assessment by the Public", October, 1983).

Because of declines in the enrollment of traditional students (kindergarten through the twelfth grades), there was less demand for traditional school services. Fewer teachers were needed and so the board reduced the size of the teaching staff each spring in anticipation of decreased enrollments in the fall. In accordance with the teacher contract, those teachers who had the least amount of seniority were laid off first. Some parents were unhappy that these lay off decisions were based on seniority rather than on qualifications. In response to these concerns, the board adopted a policy outlining teacher qualifications. The

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teachers' association filed a grievance against the board, maintaining it had violated the contract. Their contention was ultimately upheld by an arbitrator who declared the board's policy null and void.

The decrease in the number of elementary students was uneven in that it occurred in some elementary schools, but not in others. In order to redress the imbalance, school attendance boundaries were changed by the board of education. A number of parents protested the school board's action, but the board did not change its decision.

Crisis and Uncertainty

The decline experienced by the school district was characterized by crisis and uncertainty. The crisis properties of short response time and severity were evidenced by the executive order cuts in state aid which were announced shortly before they were to take place and after the annual budget had already been adopted. Unexpected executive order cuts and last minute delays in state aid combined with low fund equity balances to create severe financial problems for the district.

Uncertainty resulted from two sources: unpredictability of actions taken by members of the state legislature, the teachers' union and local voters, and of events, such as student enrollment. Unpredictable actions included (a) decisions by the state legislature in

appropriating and withholding funds, (b) decisions by the teachers in choosing whether or not to agree to wage concessions and (c) decisions by the voters in passing or defeating millage requests. All these factors made managing the decline difficult, even for a superintendent who was experienced in coping with declining enrollment. The extreme uncertainty of state funding was a new experience for him. As he said, "I have never been so frustrated in trying to plan a budget as I have this year. It's just impossible to predict what the State is going to do."

Student enrollment dropped for the first time in 1978-79 when the district lost 122 students (a 3% decrease). Enrollment continued to drop by 4% in 1979-80 and 1980-81. In 1981-82, however, the decline doubled, reaching 8%. The superintendent, who had planned to make a report to the board in January 1982 on the district's future building needs, announced he would wait until he had been in the district for a longer period of time since the student enrollment pattern was so uncertain (December 16, 1981).

Organizational Decision Makers

Decisions regarding the appropriate response to environmental decline were made by members of the board of education and the superintendent of schools. While only board members could vote, recommendations regarding the proposed responses and information supporting those

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recommendations came from the superintendent. Thus, although the superintendent could not actually vote, by initiating and recommending specific responses, he was influential in determining which actions were ultimately chosen by the board of education.

Board Members

There were seven people on the board of education. At the beginning of the study, in July 1981, three members had been on the board for at least 10 years, one member for three years, another member for one year and the remaining two had just been elected. Five of the members had been born in Eureka and had graduated from the local high school; three of those five were businessmen.

Frank Allen, a local businessman, had been a member of the board of education since 1970. During that time he had been president of the board once and treasurer several times. Originally from Grove Corners, he had moved to Eureka, where he attended Bach School and later graduated from the local high school. He was the father of two children both of whom had also graduated from Eureka High School. Most of his community contacts were with long term residents of the area, especially business people.

Finance, and buildings and grounds were two areas that interested him, and he was an active member of relevant board committees. Under the previous superintendent, board members had sometimes taken an active role in the

administration of the school district. It was difficult for Allen to give up that role when the new superintendent came in July 1981.

Allen believed that citizen participation in school district matters was appropriate. He was instrumental in organizing first a citizens financial advisory committee and subsequently six citizen and employee task forces. The citizen and employee groups were charged with recommending a course of action to the board in view of an expected budget deficit for the coming school year. He was often critical of citizens for not taking a greater interest in the schools.

What we're seeing here tonight (sparse attendance at a school board candidates meeting) is part of the problem with finances. People don't go to board meetings, yet if you go talk to them, you get criticism about the schools (Morning News, June 9, 1982).

He was opposed to cutting educational programs and preferred to balance the budget by reducing personnel costs. He voted against the teacher contract in 1980 because he believed the cost of the settlement was more than the district could afford. In 1982, he suggested that employee wage concessions and the use of volunteers in the schools might be a solution to the district's financial problems.

Mark Ferguson, another area native, grew up in the nearby village of Grove Corners and also graduated from Eureka High School. He farmed in the Grove Corners area, and owned a pipeline contracting business. His two daughters were students at the high school.

A board member since 1971, Ferguson was dedicated to doing what he thought was best for the school district, and especially the students. He wanted to bring about improvements as quickly as possible. His single mindedness and his impatience sometimes made him the object of criticism. A number of teachers and board members were interviewed for a newspaper article which attempted to analyze his defeat in the 1983 board election. Some of their comments reflected that criticism. One teacher said,

He was always knocking and degrading teachers and administrators in my presence. He made statements like, "He's no good", or "They should be fired".

The president of the teachers' association agreed that it was his offhanded remarks which got him into trouble with teachers.

He lost the election because he was quick to judge and make up his mind without taking the time to listen to both sides of an issue. But even more important, he lost because of his lack of discretion in what he said, when he said it, where he said it and to whom he said it. He boasted that he could and would get rid of certain teachers and coaches that people may have been displeased with.

Board members, on the other hand, noted his many achievements while he was a member of the board.

Mr. Ferguson was instrumental in upgrading the bus transportation system. He would always follow through when parents or anybody came up with unsafe conditions when busses were concerned.

Ferguson was one of the leaders who pushed strongly for the new bus garage and maintenance building.

He was very dedicated to doing what he thought was best for the school district.

(Morning News, August 3, 1983).

Ferguson had wanted to be president of the board for a number of years but his fellow board members were reluctant to give him that much power. Under the previous superintendent, he had been able to force the superintendent and his assistant to make some recommendations and to take some personnel actions which they did not support. He seemed to be able to exert more authority than he had due to his forceful personality and his sources of information. Parents, staff and other community members who were unhappy knew he could be depended upon to act if he were convinced it was necessary to do so. When the new superintendent came in 1981, Ferguson mounted a strong campaign for the president's job. He took the unprecedented step of contacting community members and asking them to call board members in support of his presidency. Although they were originally opposed to his candidacy, the board nominating committee reconsidered and decided to propose his name because "he would be so unhappy if he didn't get the job". One board member was adamant in her opposition, however, and threatened to vote against him if his name were proposed. At that time, board members believed it was important for the board to "present a united front" and so they were reluctant to proceed with Ferguson's nomination in the face of this threat. The start of the board meeting was delayed while several board members discussed how to resolve the problem.

Since the Open Meetings Act prevents more than three members from meeting together except in open session, it was difficult to work out a solution. Finally, the nominating committee decided not to make a report; the former president was nominated by an individual board member and was subsequently elected president. Furious that he had not at least been nominated, Ferguson sulked the rest of the meeting.

During the next year, however, he made an effort not to exceed his authority and to be more discrete in discussing school matters. The following June, he made another bid for the presidency, maintaining that "he had earned the job". This time board members acquiesced and elected him unanimously.

Margaret Kemper, though not a native of the area, had lived in Eureka since the 1960s. A dietician at the local hospital, active in community affairs and the wife of a college administrator, she knew many area residents. Her four daughters had graduated from Eureka High School.

Kemper had been a board member since 1971. Although she was president of the board for five years (1977-82), most of her leadership was not seen by the public. Unlike Ferguson, she worked behind the scenes to bring about change and did not flaunt her triumphs. She agonized over many board decisions, especially one that changed elementary school attendance boundaries. It had been a controversial decision,

and some of the parents whose children were moved to an older school were very vocal in their opposition. A 17 day teachers' strike in 1980 had been another difficult situation for her as president of the board. The members of the teachers' association had been publicly critical of the board and had enlisted the members of the community in putting pressure on board members to get a settlement favorable to the teachers.

Kemper favored community participation although sometimes she found it hard to control public comments at school board meetings. She tried to be open and honest in her relationships with the public and the school employees. She was well liked by her fellow board members and tried to deter Ferguson when she thought his actions were inappropriate.

Kathleen Ulrich, a Eureka native, had run for the board twice before she was elected in 1978. She had four children, all of whom had attended Eureka schools. A graduate of Eureka High School, she had also attended Bach School. A conscientious board member, she agonized over board decisions. Several times she was unable to attend meetings when controversial items were to be decided because of migraine headaches.

While she was board secretary, the board was sued for violation of the Open Meetings Act by the local teachers' association president. Being served by the sheriff's

department and having to testify in court were difficult situations for her.

She was concerned about community members' opinions and was often contacted by unhappy parents. A former bus driver for the district, Ulrich was often called by employees who shared their problems and concerns with her.

Carl Straub, the owner of a local business, had grown up in Eureka and had lived across the street from Bach School all his life. Neither he nor his children had attended the Eureka schools, however. Instead, they had graduated from the local Catholic school. Straub was very active in the community and had been chosen "Citizen of the Year" one month before he was elected to the board of education in 1980.

He recognized his limited knowledge in the area of personnel and curriculum, and tended to defer to other board members on decisions in those areas. He was interested in and knowledgeable about transportation and buildings and grounds issues.

Straub was always concerned that opportunities be provided for the community and the staff to react to board decisions - especially controversial ones. He often advocated delaying action on a particular proposal in order to get more information.

Edward Kirby, was a math instructor and assistant coach at the local college. Prior to that he had taught math and

coached at Eureka High School for 12 years. His wife was an elementary teacher in the system and he had many friends among the teaching staff. A long term resident, he had graduated from Eureka High School and had two children in the local schools.

Elected in 1981 on his second attempt, Kirby ran for the board because,

I want to have input into some of the important decisions that will be made in this time of financial need. My goals are to prevent the elimination of curriculum, cut in other areas and improve relationships between the board and teachers.

Concerned about what was best for the students, Kirby often seemed to vacillate on issues. It was difficult to predict whether or not he would support a particular proposal. Board members were often frustrated by the way he changed his mind from one board meeting to the next.

Sue Smith was an assistant professor in the Management department of a nearby university. While she was on the board, she was also a Ph.D. student in the School of Business at Michigan State University. Interested in how the school board responded to decreasing funds and declining enrollment, Smith conducted a two year participant observation study which resulted in this paper. She was the mother of three children, two of whom had graduated from Eureka High School, and one who was a freshman there.

A relative newcomer to the area, Smith was elected in 1981 after chairing two citizen millage task forces and a

citizen financial advisory committee. In running for the board position, Smith was concerned about improving curriculum and being accessible to all segments of the community. A citizen who had been active in trying to influence board decisions in the past, she was sensitive to providing opportunities for community members to become involved in the schools.

During her second year on the board, the superintendent recommended the closing of two schools. Smith, who had been elected vice president, and Ferguson, who was president, conferred frequently with the superintendent on how to handle the school closing issue. Smith was given the task of explaining possible strategies to and consulting with individual board members during that period. This role complemented her other role, that of participant - observer and enabled her to tap the sense making process being used by various board members, especially as it related to the school closing issue.

In July, 1982, when the superintendent made his Future Building Needs Report, the officers of the board were:

President, Mark Ferguson

Vice President, Sue Smith

Secretary, Kathleen Ulrich

Treasurer, Frank Allen

Trustees, Margaret Kemper

Edward Kirby

Carl Straub

Each of the board members had been on the school board for at least one year. The membership of the board remained constant from July 1981 until July 1983 when Ferguson was defeated and Kemper chose not to run for re-election.

Superintendent Richards

Thomas Richards was hired to replace James Anderson, who had retired in June, 1981 after serving 42 years in the school system as teacher, coach, principal and superintendent. Richards was chosen from many applicants on a unanimous vote by the board of education. He had been with the his previous school district for 15 years as teacher, principal and superintendent. During his tenure as superintendent, student enrollment dropped from 7,788 in 1971-72 to 4,000 in 1980-81. The board of education had closed and sold an elementary school in response to that decline. At the same time, the superintendent had led successful efforts to pass millage increases. He said the key was, "year long, positive publicity efforts. We're doing a good job teaching youngsters. We just have to tell people what we're doing."

CHAPTER THREE

BOARD VOTES TO CLOSE BACH SCHOOL

Factors Leading to Superintendent's Future Building Needs Report

Citizen's Suggestion

The idea of closing an elementary school, as a means of reducing district expenses, first surfaced at a citizens meeting in July, 1980. The meeting had been called to get community reactions to some proposed programming cuts which had been necessitated by executive order cuts in state aid and an unexpected decrease in enrollment of 100 students. The idea, raised by an individual citizen, was not pursued at the time and was not considered again until January, 1981.

Citizens Financial Advisory Committee Recommendations

In January 1981, the Board of Education appointed a Citizens Financial Advisory Committee. The committee was charged with recommending a course of action to the board, given the projected deficit of \$760,000 and an expected loss of 100 students in 1981-82. The committee suggested a "shared approach to the solution of the problem" as follows:

1. Close an elementary school, saving \$100,000.

2. Ask the school district's employees to help in the solution of the problem, saving \$500,000.

3. Ask the voters for additional millage, covering the remaining deficit of \$610,000 (Morning News, January 30, 1981).

The decision to recommend closing an elementary school was arrived at after looking at the decline in kindergarten through sixth grade enrollment since 1973 (a loss of 288 students). That student loss was greater than the capacity of one of the elementary schools. As one member of the committee said, "When I have empty beds at the hospital, I close down a wing. I think we should close a school if we don't have enough students" (January, 1981).

The committee's recommendations were studied by six additional task forces (three consisting of citizens and three of employees) appointed by the board during the spring of 1981. Closing an elementary school was eliminated from the task force's current recommendations and became part of a list of possible suggestions which should be "studied and considered" in the future. Concern was expressed that if the closed school should need to be re-opened at a later time, the current fire code and certain federal regulations would have to be followed. The cost of bringing the building into compliance with the various codes and regulations was thought to be prohibitive (Elementary Building Subcommittee Report, March 5, 1981).

Other School Districts Close Schools in Response to Decline

While the task forces were deliberating, the State Superintendent of Public Instruction spoke to a state meeting of school administrators about the problem of decline facing public schools in Michigan. "Enrollments are declining, school buildings are being closed, teachers are being laid off and traditional revenue sources are drying up" (Michigan Association of School Administrators Meeting, February, 1981).

New Superintendent Experienced in Managing Decline

When a new superintendent was chosen in June of 1981, a newspaper editorial extolled the school board's choice of a man who was experienced in managing decline. Although the system from which he had come had lost over half its enrollment in the preceeding 10 years, the superintendent had been able to "maintain educational quality by upgrading existing programs and adding new ones" (Morning News Editorial, June 11, 1981).

Deficit Budget Projected for School District
Board Cuts Programs and Asks for Tax Increase

At the new superintendent's first board meeting on July 7, the board took a number of steps to balance the budget. The proposed property tax increase had been voted down the previous month: 53% no to 47% yes. The millage defeat

created a deficit of \$362,562 for the current fiscal year. In response, the board took the following action:

1. Eliminated all extra curricular activities at the junior high and high school,

2. Eliminated all art, music and physical education from the elementary school curriculum,

3. Eliminated all elective programs at the junior high,

4. Restored the Adult Education Director position to half-time and reduced the Athletic Director position to half-time. (This was done on the recommendation of the superintendent. Previously the board had voted to eliminate the Adult Education Director position.)

5. Required that junior and senior high school classes not having an enrollment of 85% of maximum size (as defined by the teacher contract) be dropped from the schedule,

6. Scheduled another election on the proposed property tax increase for the following month.

Some board members were skeptical about the advisability of scheduling another election in August. The superintendent would have been on the job for less than two months which would not have been enough time for him to bring about the changes the voters wanted: improvements in the management of the school district. The superintendent supported the proposed election, however, saying he did not want to start out his new job by dismantling the curriculum. Members of the audience agreed with him and urged board

members to give the voters another opportunity to pass the millage before instituting such drastic cuts. The motion to schedule the election in August passed unanimously.

At the end of the meeting, the superintendent addressed the board and members of the audience. He urged, "an end to the infighting among employees, board members and citizens which would only succeed in bringing down the educational system" (Board of Education Minutes, July 7, 1981).

Transportation Plan Revised

Two weeks later the board adopted a revised transportation plan. The new plan changed the starting and ending times of the school day, reduced the number of bus stops and lengthened the distance students would have to walk. The resultant decrease in the number of busses and drivers needed was expected to reduce transportation expenses by at least \$30,000 a year (Board of Education Minutes, July 20, 1981).

"One mill" Funds Used for Operating

On August 17, the board approved the use of one half of the funds which had been designated for renovation (known as the "one mill" funds) in the past to supplement the 1981-82 general fund budget. The funds would be used for supplies and the replacement of equipment instead of for building and site renovation. A citizen in the audience objected to what he termed the "mis-use of the funds" and asked for the attorney's opinion on whether or not the funds were being

used properly. Robert Solomon, the school board attorney, replied that the fund's use was in accordance with the language of the one mill proposal approved by the voters. The finance committee chairman reminded the board that the use of the one mill funds to supplement the general fund budget had been recommended by citizen and staff advisory groups as an appropriate budget balancing measure the previous spring.

Rental Fees Increased

The superintendent recommended that building rental fees be increased to reflect the actual costs incurred by the district. The board agreed, with the understanding that the fee could be waived by the superintendent in certain cases. Board members were concerned that some groups, such as scout groups, should not be excluded from using the building due to the increased rental fee (Board of Education Minutes, August 17, 1981).

Millage Proposal Passes

The millage increase proposal passed on August 25 after an extensive and visible campaign which had involved teachers, administrators and community members under the leadership of the new superintendent. The proposal passed 58% yes to 42% no in the highest voter turnout in recent history. The teachers' association put on a victory party afterwards, inviting everyone who had worked on the campaign to come and celebrate. When the new superintendent walked

into the room, everyone cheered. There was a feeling of goodwill and camaraderie among the board members, administrators and teachers which had been noticably absent since the 17 day teachers' strike the previous fall.

Programs Reinstated

The next night, the board reinstated the programs it had cut in July and recalled 11 of the teachers it had laid off in June. It also accepted a promisory note for \$20,000 from the Athletic Booster Club in support of the athletic program. While the board had been able to avoid making the \$360,000 in additional cuts because of the successful millage campaign, the \$575,000 in program cuts, which had been made earlier in the spring were still in effect.

Enrollment Decline

The following month the new superintendent proposed that the board adopt goals and objectives for the year 1981-82. One of the areas of concern was "enrollment and future building needs". He suggested that a projection of future enrollment be conducted, followed by a comprehensive study of "educational and building" needs. The board approved this goal, along with goals in the area of staff evaluations and public relations (Board of Education Minutes, September 21, 1981).

In October, a loss of 311 students (an 8% decline) for the 1981-82 school year was announced at the board meeting.

The superintendent reiterated his intent of beginning work on a five year enrollment projection for the school district (Board of Education Minutes, October 15, 1981).

Enrollment Projection Received by Board

The forecast, which was the first long term enrollment projection ever to have been received by the board, was presented at the December, 1981 board meeting. It predicted an annual rate of decline through 1986-87 of 2-3%. Given this expected decline over the next five years, the superintendent indicated that the board needed to review the future program and building needs of the district. In response to a question from a parent in the audience, he assured the parent that, "The board will not be closing a school next year, but must begin a serious study of the district's future building needs. There will be a lot of dialogue with the community before we close any building" (Morning News, December 23, 1981). The superintendent pointed out the difficulty he had experienced in developing projections because the decline rate which had been 3-4% per year since 1977, had suddenly jumped to 8% in 1981 ("Enrollment Projections", December 16, 1981).

In January, 1982 the superintendent informed the board that,

If the enrollment declines as projected, we will soon have elementary schools with enrollments so low that we no longer are operating efficiently, both from an educational and financial standpoint. In addition, the junior high will soon be at an enrollment of under 500 students. It should be able to comfortably house close

to 700 students.

He recommended to the board that he prepare a comprehensive report for the June 21 board meeting. At that time, he suggested the board could accept the report but defer taking any action on it until after the members of the community had an opportunity to react to it at a series of meetings scheduled throughout the district. Such a process, he observed, "would give everyone the opportunity for input in what can be a very important step for the future of the district" ("Future Building Needs", January 13, 1982).

Board Members Interviewed

When asked, in two separate interviews, how they felt about building closings, board members responded as indicated in Table 6. There were mixed reactions each of the two times that each member was interviewed. The majority of the members responded differently in June than they had at the earlier interview in February or March. They realized in June that closing a school would probably be necessary. No additional information on declining enrollment had been presented to board members during that time. Members were well aware, however, of the state's financial problems. Three executive order cuts in state aid had been made since the beginning of the school year, and several payments had been delayed. The preliminary budget, received by board members in May, had projected a 1982-83 deficit of \$90,000 even after the district's savings were exhausted. The board

Table 6
Should We Close an Elementary School: Board Member Responses

<u>Board Members</u>	<u>February/March, 1982</u> ^a	<u>June, 1982</u> ^a
Allen	Yes	Maybe
Ferguson	Maybe	Yes
Kemper	Hope don't have to	Have to, don't want to
Kirby	Probably have to	Should have done sooner
Smith	Necessary	Necessary
Straub	Inevitable	Not available
Ulrich	Better than K-3, and 4-6	Need more information

^a Interview Data

had asked the Finance Committee and the Superintendent to discuss wage concessions with the various employee unions because of the seriousness of the financial situation (Interviews of School Board Members, February, March and June 1982; Board of Education Minutes, May, 1982).

"Recommendation on Future Building Needs"

Board Receives Superintendent's Report

In July of 1982, the board received the superintendent's "Recommendation on Future Building Needs" report. Noting that the district had been trying to adapt to declining enrollment over the past five years by decreasing staff, changing school boundaries and closing relocatable buildings, he indicated that further steps were now necessary. Because enrollment was projected to continue to decline through at least 1987, he made the following recommendations to the board:

1. Close two elementary schools at the conclusion of the 1982-83 school year.

2. Move all sixth graders from the elementary schools to the intermediate school, which would then house sixth, seventh and eighth grades.

3. Hold special Board of Education meetings at each elementary school to "receive input from as many citizens in the school district as possible" prior to taking action on

the recommended changes.

The superintendent pointed out that he had

purposely not named elementary buildings to be closed so that all of us will have an open mind during the community meetings, regarding the specific buildings to close. The Eureka Schools, like almost all school districts, recognizes the importance of neighborhood schools. There is no question that it is important for neighborhoods and families to identify with elementary schools. For this reason it is difficult to make recommendations and logical decisions when facing declining enrollment. The educational and financial problems associated with declining enrollment require us to address the problem. If we do not address the problem now, it will seriously affect our educational program at all levels.

It is important for the district as a whole that we all approach and review this problem in a rational manner. It is important that we ask questions and provide input to the Board of Education. In the end, decisions need to be made not only on what decisions are best financially for the district, but the most important point must be, what is best educationally for the students of the district. (Recommendation on Future Building Needs, July 19, 1982).

The staffing implications of the changes in building use would be minimal, according to the superintendent. Other than a possible slight decrease in the need for teachers due to a better balancing of elementary class sizes, teacher staffing was not expected to decrease beyond the normal loss due to declining enrollment. The closing of two buildings would result in the reduction of three to four custodial positions, two secretarial positions, two cafeteria employees, two teacher aides and two elementary building principals.

Curriculum factors, such as reducing the number of split classes and changing to a middle school (according

to the superintendent) were "foremost in importance" in contributing to his recommendations. As enrollment had decreased the number of split classes (those classes where a single teacher teaches two different grade levels in the same classroom) had increased. Many educators and parents perceived split classes "as being a less effective educational delivery system than a single classroom....With larger enrollments at each of the elementary schools, the number of split classes will be decreased."

Moving the sixth graders to the intermediate school would permit the district to offer a middle school experience to its sixth, seventh and eighth grade students. Such a grouping would enable the middle school to "provide an educational, psychological, social and physical experience that helps a young person move from childhood dependence to adult independence. All students in the district would equally benefit by this change."

Financial factors were also considered in making the recommendation.

There is no doubt that a school district realizes a financial savings as a result of closing schools....The savings involved in closing two elementary schools should result in a savings of \$150,000 to \$200,000 a year.... In light of the limited amounts of dollars available for education, this is a considerable savings and one that must certainly be taken into consideration (Recommended Future Building Needs, July 7, 1982, pp. 13-15).

While transportation costs would increase if two elementary schools were closed, the amount of the increase would be

much less than the cost of maintaining a building.

Alternatives to building closings which were also addressed by the superintendent in his report included:

1. Keep all buildings open. This option would preserve tradition including the neighborhood school concept. The problem with continuing with the status quo, however, "is that the district's needs are changing. This creates limits on all educational programs because small building enrollment escalates operating costs and puts increasing pressure on the local taxpayer to support less cost efficient programs."

2. Keep all buildings open but change attendance boundaries. Since there are not enough students to go around, the solution would be temporary and boundaries would have to be changed again in a short time.

3. Close only one elementary school, keeping kindergarten through the sixth grade in the elementary school and seventh through the eighth grades at the intermediate level. Again, this would be a temporary solution. Projected enrollments for the next five years indicate that the intermediate school would soon be operating at only one half of its capacity.

Proposed criteria to be used in deciding which school to close included the following:

1. The effect of closing a particular school on the entire district. That is, the impact of distributing the

students from the closed school among the remaining schools. The goal is to offer "two classes per grade level with a desirable minimum of 300 students per elementary school".

2. The building's marketability to outside groups.

3. The age, size and condition of the building and surrounding grounds.

Since it was deemed undesirable for closed schools to be left vacant for any length of time, alternative uses for the building were thought to be necessary. Possible alternative uses that could be considered included the following:

1. Programs offered by the school district, such as an expanded adult education program, a day care center and special education programs.

2. Programs offered by community groups.

3. Sale of the building to private business.

It was thought possible that one of the two elementary schools could be retained and used for district programs as a "hedge against future growth".

Board Responds to Report

Following the superintendent's presentation, the board agreed on the following process for considering the "Recommendations on Future Building Needs" report.

1. During September the board would hold special board meetings at each of the seven elementary schools. The purpose of the meetings would be to give the

superintendent an opportunity to share his report with the community and to give the Board of Education an opportunity to listen to the community's reaction to the report.

2. On October 4, the board would hold a preliminary discussion at an open, well publicized board meeting.

3. On October 18, the board would act on the superintendent's final recommendation ordering implementation as necessary.

The report was well received by the board. Straub questioned the procedures recommended by the superintendent for reviewing and acting on it. He suggested that perhaps the board should appoint a task force to study the school closing proposal. The superintendent recommended against appointing a task force and the idea was dropped. Although the fact that a recommendation to close two elementary schools would be on the Board of Education meeting agenda was announced in the local paper prior to the board meeting, only a few community members were in attendance. Those who were there did not ask any questions, although they took copies of the report home with them (July 19, 1982).

Concessions Request Rejected by Association

At the August board meeting, the superintendent reported that the teachers' association had rejected the board's request for wage concessions. He said that the

association had indicated it would be willing to review the issue again at a later date if the district's finances declined significantly after the state aid formula and enrollment figures became known in the fall (Board of Education Minutes, August 16, 1982).

Board Hearings on the Superintendent's Report

Tappan Elementary School. The first of seven special board of education meetings was held at Tappan Elementary School on September 8. The school had been rumored to be the one slated for closing since January 1981 when the possibility of closing a school was first given serious consideration. Parents had been notified of the upcoming meeting by the following notice:

School Closing

Will Tappan stay open? Come to the Special Board Meeting on Wednesday, September 8, to hear the Superintendent's recommendations FEEL FREE TO ASK HOW THE CLOSING WILL AFFECT YOU.

The community at large was reminded of the meeting by an article summarizing the Future Building Needs report which appeared in the newspaper the day of the meeting (Morning News, September 8, 1984).

Prior to the meeting, board members were reminded that their role was to listen and consider the questions and suggestions of community members in attendance. The superintendent commented in his letter to board members that while building closings could be a volatile issue, that need not be the case. He went on to say,

It is my opinion that if the community is convinced that they have been given all of the facts and they have had the opportunity to ask questions and provide input that is taken into consideration, this can be a smooth process. (Letter to Board of Education from Superintendent, September 3, 1982).

Approximately 70 citizens attended the meeting held in the Tappan gymnasium. The superintendent made a 45 minute presentation on the district's "Future Building Needs". During the question and answer period following his presentation, the superintendent recognized that closing a school "diminished the neighborhood school concept" and that some people had bought homes near an elementary school because they wanted their children to go to school there. Nevertheless, he asked people to "think of what was best for the entire district". His main argument in the written report itself and at the meeting that night was that "as a community we need to face the problem of declining enrollment and to take those steps that would benefit the education of all the students" (September 8, 1982).

Several members of the audience raised concerns about what would happen to the surrounding neighborhood if the school were closed. Others suggested that declining enrollment might be only a temporary phenomenon and that perhaps the board should adopt other options such as changing school attendance boundaries as stop-gap measures. The use of such measures would enable the board to delay the school closing decision for several years (Board of Education Minutes, September 8, 1982). Other questions

centered on what criteria would be used to determine which buildings would be closed, how closed buildings would be utilized and whether or not the closings were necessary. The superintendent assured the audience that before the district sold a closed building it would have a special meeting in the affected neighborhood to hear citizen reactions to the proposed sale (Morning News, September 9, 1982).

Jones Elementary School. The next night the board met in special session at the Jones School. The superintendent's remarks were the same as the preceeding evening except that he indicated the board had heard some new ideas at the preceeding night's meeting which would be researched. He said he was open to suggestions and that he would change his recommendation to the board before it was voted upon on October 18, if necessary. Questions centered on concerns about including the sixth graders with seventh and eighth graders, the effect of closing a school on the surrounding neighborhood, and what would happen to the money realized from the sale of an elementary school (Board of Education Minutes, September 9, 1982).

Bach Elementary School. On the following Tuesday, the board met at the third school. During the hour long question and answer period following the presentation, several of the 70 citizens in attendance questioned whether the closings would be the best solution for the students and the community.

You've discussed economics and administration, but I haven't heard a lot about the students.

If Bach were closed, and if this is a neighborhood in transition, will families with kids continue to move in? Or would the neighborhood become apartments with singles, many of them college students?

The audience applauded after one woman claimed that "Bach is the finest elementary school in the city" (Morning News, September 14, 1982). Many concerns were also raised about the middle school concept and whether sixth graders were "ready" for such an experience. Several parents spoke of the quality of education their children were receiving at that particular school and their concern that that would not be true if their children were sent elsewhere (Board of Education Minutes, September 13, 1982). The tone of the meeting was expressed by the parent who said in exasperation, "You're talking finances, and we're talking emotions."

Community reaction to hearing process. Several days later an editorial lauding the superintendent's "responsive approach to school closings" appeared in the local paper. Citizens were urged to ask questions and to seek answers at the various meetings being held throughout the community. The editor closed with the following comments.

Some parents feel the district is only looking at the possible dollar savings and not considering the students. But reality is that education is costly, hard economic times are taking their toll, and anything a district can do to save money without damaging the educational process is the only responsible move to make. (Morning News, September 15, 1982)

A parent who attended one of the meetings did not agree with

the editor's assessment of the process.

After listening to the presentation, I can clearly see that the entire issue of closing two elementary schools should have been brought before the public much sooner....This is a very important issue in our community to be decided upon by a select few, and needs a more thorough and lengthy investigation which will determine the future of our community (Morning News, September 15, 1982).

Angell Elementary School. At the fourth meeting, the superintendent announced that this year's enrollment at the elementary level was 23 less than projected but was higher than expected at both the intermediate and high schools. Therefore, he said, it might not be possible to move the sixth graders to the intermediate school next fall. If that were the case, then only one elementary school could be closed. Audience members asked questions about the use of relocatables (temporary, one room buildings which could be moved to different sites); the effect of school closings on class size, on curriculum, and on neighborhood deterioration, and the advisability of putting sixth graders in the intermediate school.

Burns Park Elementary School. Similar concerns were expressed at the next meeting. In addition, some people questioned the accuracy of the projections. One of the members of the audience who did long range planning for the college expressed confidence in the process. For the first time, appreciation for the superintendent's response to the problem was expressed by a parent. "I'm really pleased with the comprehensiveness of this report, and I think it will

work." Her remarks were followed by applause from the rest of the audience. One of the staff members told me later in private that the people at that particular meeting were convinced their school would not be one of those closed (September 16, 1982).

Community response to hearings. The next day a letter to the editor appeared in the morning paper. The writer talked about the pride she and others felt for their school. At the same time, she recognized the difficult decisions the school board was facing.

I know you are proud of your school, too. No parent wants their child's school to be closed. No parent wants their child bussed out of their neighborhood to a different school. That is why I urge all parents to attend these special meetings. There is nothing more important than our children. Our school board is going to need all the support they can get to make such a drastic decision. Please attend these meetings (Morning News, September 17, 1982).

Unanticipated Changes in State Aid and Student Enrollments

At the school board meeting the following week, the superintendent announced that the state aid bill which had passed the legislature was less than that recommended by the governor and therefore the district would be receiving less state aid per student than had been projected in the budget. Enrollment at the intermediate and high schools was above what had been anticipated as was the number of adult education students. Fortunately, the increased enrollment more than offset the decrease in state aid per student. The increased 7-12 enrollment meant that the superintendent

might have to change his recommendations regarding school closings. The state Department of Education had informed the superintendent that \$214,000 had been withheld from the August state aid payment. While the district would get those funds back again in June so that the board could balance the budget, the state would take them back again in August to use in balancing their own budget. The expectation was that this would continue every year, creating a "revolving accounts receivable" (September 20, 1982).

In a conversation with the superintendent the next day, he suggested to me that perhaps the board should vote in October on which schools to close with the understanding that the decision would not be implemented until the fall of 1984 - a delay of almost two years after the decision was made. With the higher than anticipated enrollment at the intermediate school, it would not be possible to move the sixth graders to that school until 1984. Unless the sixth graders were moved, it would not be possible to close more than one elementary school in 1983. Rather than closing one in 1983 and one in 1984, which would result in changing attendance boundaries two years in a row, perhaps the board should make the decision now but not implement it until 1984-85. My feeling at the time was that the board seemed to vacillate too much. I wondered if the community had the same perception. If so, surely their confidence in the board would be shaken. We seemed to keep changing our minds on

what to do about budget cuts and now we were about to do the same thing on the school closing issue. I concluded that the problem was we were facing so much uncertainty regarding future funding and expenses (September 21, 1982).

Grove Corners Elementary School. At Grove Corners that night, the president, who was from the Grove Corners area, and the superintendent traded good natured insults at the beginning of the meeting. The audience laughed and there seemed to be good rapport between the superintendent and the audience. The parents were concerned about the long bus ride their children would have if their school were closed, and they were bussed into town. The school was located in a small farming community outside of town. The area had been annexed into the school district relatively recently. Prior to that time it had been a small independent district. Many questions regarding the advisability of putting sixth graders in with seventh and eighth graders were also raised. In spite of the opposition expressed to both the middle school concept and the closing of their school (many seemed convinced it would be because they had traditionally voted down millages), the audience applauded following the question and answer period. That was the only meeting where that kind of response had occurred (Board of Education Minutes, September 21, 1982).

Wilkshire Elementary School. The final meeting did not go as well as the preceeding two. Members of the audience

were quicker to challenge the superintendent's recommendations and were critical of the superintendent's attitude, believing that he was defending his proposals rather than getting reactions from the audience. Many of them were college faculty, who had often been critical of administrative plans in the past and who were not reticent in expressing their views. In addition, the superintendent had not been able to establish a feeling of rapport with the audience as he had in most of the other meetings. This audience was the least friendly group the superintendent and board had faced since the meeting at Bach School. Opinions on the advisabililty of putting sixth graders in the intermediate school were divided. Alternative responses to decline, other than closing schools, were suggested. The tenor of the meeting was perhaps summed up best by the parent who commented,

A lot of people here tonight have expressed their concern about the quality of education. I hope that is one of the top criteria used in making the decision of which building to close. The building's physical characteristics should not be the only criteria used. Look at the administrators and teachers in the building as well. Take advantage of this oppportunity to improve education (Board of Education Minutes, September 23, 1982.

Written Comments Received

A review of written comments turned in at the end of the special board meetings and of letters received by the superintendent indicated there was more concern about moving sixth graders to the intermediate school than there was

about closing a particular school. Several parents did write, urging the board not to close their school. One parent, new to the district wrote,

I was at the meeting ...last night. I thought you did a terrific job. I agree something needs to be done to cut costs. I know this is going to be a hard decision, but after listening to you I know you will do what is best for our children. And that should be everyone's main concern. Just please continue to do what is best for the kids and don't change your mind just to please a few. (Letter to Board of Education from a parent, September 22, 1982).

Preliminary Board Discussion of Superintendent's Report

I discussed the problem of unanticipated enrollment increases at the intermediate school with individual board members. Each of the discussions lasted about an hour and board members were eager to share their ideas with me. Several commented, "I don't know what I think until I've discussed it with someone." Board members were struggling with the many different pieces of information they had received: enrollment projections, financial data, the condition and operating costs of each of the schools, community opinions, transportation costs and curriculum implications. They had to interpret these different pieces of information in some way so that they could make a decision about whether or not to close schools, and, if so, how many and which ones.

Three of the seven members expressed frustration with the Open Meetings Act which required that discussion of these items take place in an open meeting. Two board members

wanted more information before making a decision and one of those persons felt she was being rushed into a decision too quickly. Individual members had different opinions regarding (a) the criteria that should be used in choosing the school to be closed, (b) what enrollment trends would be in the future, (c) how the community would react to the school closing(s), (d) what delivery system was best for educating sixth graders, and (e) the effects of naming or not naming the closed schools 18 months before the decision was to be implemented. There was a great deal of floundering as board members struggled with how to make the decision and how to interpret the information they had been given.

Board members expressed their concerns regarding the school closing decision and its possible consequences.

Changing school boundaries will also take a lot of time and will be controversial, once people know which schools are going to be closed. It's hard on kids - changing schools. Last time it was very emotional. Closing the schools will be just the beginning - it's just a drop in the bucket compared to changing boundaries. The last time boundaries were changed and kids were moved from one school to another, the Bloomfield Valley parents were very outspoken against the boundary change. They didn't want their kids going to school with the Indians and the poor kids. I hate to see us close any of the schools (Discussions with Board Members, September 27, 1982).

Most board members believed that making the decision in October 1982, but not implementing it until September 1984, would reduce their feelings of anxiety about (a) the amount of planning time in the schedule and (b) the uncertainty of future enrollment patterns. Two board members were

opposed to making the decision then and implementing it later. One was convinced that, "You should make the best plan you can and then go forward." There would be too many negative consequences, in his opinion, if the board were to delay implementation. He favored closing one school now and another later, if it were necessary. The other person preferred delaying the school closing decision, as well as its implementation, for one more year.

October 4 Board Meeting

The board's discussion centered around the unexpected increase in enrollment at the intermediate school and what options the board had in light of this new development. The alternative choices which various board members suggested were:

1. Postpone the school closing decision for one more year, until October, 1983.

- 2.a. Decide now to close two schools and move the sixth graders to the intermediate school; implement the decision in 1984. Name the schools to be closed now.

- 2.b. Make the same decision as outlined in 2.a. but refrain from naming the two schools to be closed until October 1983, a year from now.

3. Close one elementary school in 1983, move the sixth graders to the the intermediate school in 1984 and close a second elementary school in 1984.

4. Move all the sixth graders to one elementary school

in 1983, close one elementary school in 1983. Move the sixth graders to the intermediate school when there was room (1984 or after), then close that elementary school which the sixth graders had been occupying.

5. Adopt the superintendent's original recommendation of closing two elementary schools and moving all sixth graders to the intermediate school in 1983.

Members argued for and against these various options as they tried to anticipate future enrollments, community reaction, teacher reaction and the district's financial situation in the coming year. At the same time, they tried to make a judgement about what would be best for the children educationally. Finally after two hours of discussion they agreed to meet again the following week to continue their discussion. It was agreed that they would vote on what to do at the October 18 meeting. At the close of the meeting, one of the teachers in the audience, who had been a frequent critic of the board in the past, commended the board for its openness in discussing the school closing issue (Secretary's Notes on Board Discussion, October 4, 1982).

Prior to the the next board meeting, in a conversation with the superintendent, he suggested that the board not postpone the school closing decision since "we needed to close at least one". This was the year to make the decision, in his opinion, since there was no plan to ask voters for a

tax renewal or increase on this year's June ballot (October 10, 1982).

October 11 Board Meeting

As the result of new information on student enrollments and community reactions to his original recommendations, the superintendent changed his recommendation to the board on future building use. He proposed that:

1. One elementary school be closed at the end of the 1982-83 school year; attendance boundaries be reestablished for the remainder of the six schools.

2, The closed elementary school be retained by the district.

3. Specific uses for the closed building be recommended to the board for its consideration on January 17, 1983.

4. Student enrollment continue to be monitored annually with the understanding that additional schools might be closed if enrollment continued to decline.

5. A study developing a proposed curriculum for a possible middle school be conducted by May, 1984 (Board of Education Minutes, October 11, 1982).

Board discussion centered around the issue of community disruption caused by frequent changes versus the financial cost to the district of not closing a building when it could do so. Calling a second school closing one year after the first "psychologically and emotionally disruptive" to the families involved, the superintendent

recommended waiting three to four years before closing the second school. "Program cuts affect lots of people psychologically, too," countered one of the board members (Morning News, October 12, 1982). Consensus among board members was finally reached on the following:

1. The school district needed to close an elementary school at the end of the current year.

2. The district should continue to monitor enrollment annually, determining at that time, what should be done in regard to possible building closings.

3. The board was in favor of a middle school concept (Board of Education Minutes, October 11, 1982).

In response to a request from the superintendent, individual board members suggested the following criteria be considered in selecting the specific school to be closed:

1. Suitability for other uses,
2. Effect on surrounding community,
3. Operating cost of the building,
4. Effect on transportation of students,
5. Age of building,
6. Adaptability of those affected,
7. Safety of school, that is its proximity to heavy traffic.

The board president asked each board member to name the school he or she thought should be closed. No one was willing to do that, however, preferring to act on the

superintendent's recommendation at the next meeting.

During the public comment section of the meeting, a teacher/parent noted that the board had discussed the impact the school closing might have on the community outside of the school and on maintenance costs, but it needed to consider the impact such a closing would have on the community within the building.

During the week following the board meeting, I talked with individual board members regarding their opinions about which building should be closed. By afternoon on the day of the board meeting, three board members had indicated their intent to support the superintendent's recommendation to close Bach. One favored Burns Park, one favored Tappan and two were not sure we should close any elementary schools. Four votes were needed to close a particular building (October 18, 1982).

The superintendent informed board members of his recommendation on the Thursday before the board meeting. Several other citizens, part of a dialogue group, who met with the superintendent on a regular basis, were also informed. The recommendation was given to the local newspaper by a disgruntled member of the dialogue group who lived in the Bach neighborhood. As a result, the public was informed of the superintendent's recommendation to close Bach the morning of the board meeting. The teachers and other Bach staff, who were supposed to hear about it in a

staff meeting that morning, read about it in the local newspaper instead.

In commenting on his recommendation to the newspaper reporter, the superintendent observed, "You won't get 100% approval in cases like this, but you have to do what is best for all of the students in the district" (Morning News, October 18, 1984).

October 18 Board Meeting

The superintendent's recommendation to close Bach School had appeared in the paper that morning, and approximately 80 Bach parents and teachers attended the board meeting that night (Board of Education Minutes, October 18, 1982). Half an hour before the meeting started, the board president, who had been in favor of closing Burns Park, asked how many votes I had to close Bach. I replied, "three". "Good", he said, "then I'll vote for Bach. Closing Burns Park was only a backup plan." Going into the meeting there were four members supporting the superintendent's recommendation to close Bach.

Correspondence read at the meeting included a letter from a city resident who wondered if it would be possible for the city and the public schools to share facilities so that it would not be necessary to close an elementary school. A similar idea had been suggested in a letter to the editor in that morning's newspaper (Letter to Board of Education, October 15, 1982 and Morning News, October 18,

1982).

The superintendent recommended that one elementary school be closed at the end of the 1982-83 school year, for financial and educational reasons. During board discussion of the motion to adopt the superintendent's recommendation, one board member objected, saying that other options were viable and he was still not convinced that this was the best option. "I don't want to be in a position of tying our hands for the future, if the district's enrollment increases again." Another board member pointed out that, "If the projections don't hold up, we still will be able to realize savings from closing the building. The building would not be sold immediately so our hands would not be tied." The motion passed five to one with one abstention (Central Life, October 20, 1982).

Secondly, the superintendent recommended that Bach be designated as the building to be closed. The reasons he gave were:

1. Closing Bach would permit reassigning students to other schools, increasing their enrollment.
2. Bach is the smallest and oldest building.
3. It has the fewest number of small group meeting areas, which are needed for the present teaching mode.
4. Closing Bach would not disrupt the present delivery system of services to Title I schools.
5. It is the least expensive building to operate for

alternative use.

6. Sixty-nine percent of the students are being transported currently.

7. There is a potential area for increasing parking on the school grounds with minimal additional expense to the district (Memo to Board of Education from Superintendent, October 14, 1982).

Board discussion followed:

Smith: I would like to move that Bach be closed, but before I do that I would like to present my rationale for supporting the superintendent's recommendation. I think it is important for people to realize we've given this a lot of independent thought and we're not saying "yes" just because the superintendent is recommending it. As I thought about which school should be closed I used four criteria which I would like to share with you.

1. Effect on the students's education,
2. Effect on the neighborhood school concept,
3. Effect on the neighborhood surrounding the school,
4. Effect of moving present programs to different schools.

Our decision should be one that has the least detrimental effect on the children's education. But, students in several schools, besides just the one being closed, will have to be moved because of the need to balance the students among the remaining schools. Also, principals may be moved to different schools. Closing a particular school does not automatically eliminate that individual from a principal's position. Teachers will move throughout the district because of the bumping process as lay offs are made due to declining enrollment. Therefore, which school we close won't affect children's education.

I am in favor of the neighborhood school concept. The extent to which a school is a neighborhood school depends on the number of walkers it has. I ranked the schools in order of fewest to most walkers and came up with the following list:

Grove Corners	46
Angell	85
Bach	87
Tappan	111
Wilkshire	124

Burns Park 168
Jones 207

We want the closing to have the least detrimental effect on the neighborhood so I looked at the neighborhood and the school's role in the life of the surrounding community. Therefore, I evaluated the above ranking in light of the effect closing a school would have on the neighborhood. Grove Corners School is the center for the community. It would have a devastating effect on that community if its school were closed. Therefore, I eliminated Grove Corners from consideration.

Lastly, I considered the effect of moving the programs presently housed in that school to a different building. Angell was eliminated from consideration because of its extensive Special Education facilities and the cost of duplicating those in another building.

That brings us to Bach. I move that it be closed at the end of the 1982-83 school year (Morning News October 19, 1982).

Seconded by Allen.

Straub: I'm surprised, although I thought it would be Bach, Tappan or Jones. I am concerned about the Bach School neighborhood and community. We shouldn't close Bach because it's a safe area for walkers; there is no busy thoroughfare for them to cross, as there is at Tappan. If we close Bach and enrollment stabilizes so that it's not necessary to close a second school, and if the programs we have planned for Bach don't bring in enough revenue to support the school, we will have to sell it. Bach is not one of our more marketable schools and it's not attractive to the city for offices or library use as Tappan is. Bach is the least expensive school to operate. I hope the board considers all these reasons.

Allen: I support closing Bach. My first preference was to close Tappan because of the traffic situation on Division Street. But, because of the number of walkers at Tappan, it would be harder to transfer them to other schools. Grove Corners and Bach were my second choice. Grove Corners would be easier to redistrict than Bach but the costs of transporting those students would be higher. Also, it would be detrimental to that community.

Kirby: It's difficult to get to one school. There is nothing overriding. There are pros and cons for closing any one of four or five schools. It will be important to the neighborhood surrounding the school,

no matter which one we close. I have no strong feeling that this is the one we need to close.

Ferguson: There is not an amazing difference. A case could be made for closing several schools. I couldn't come to the conclusion that one school had to be closed. I think the recommendation is in the best interests of the school system.

Before calling for a vote on the motion, the board president permitted members of the audience to speak on the issue. A mother of a Bach fifth-grader stood and addressed the board, "I'm sick about this. The atmosphere at Bach is outstanding and Mr. Wilson is an excellent principal." Her remarks were followed by applause but no one else in the audience expressed an opinion (Morning News, October 10, 1982).

The motion to close Bach School passed unanimously. The board also agreed that:

1. A public hearing would be held on the proposed new elementary school boundaries before a final decision was made regarding them on January 17, 1983.

2. The administration should provide the board with a specific plan for the use of Bach School by January 17, 1983.

3. Current district enrollment as well as enrollment projections should be monitored annually by the board to determine if and when buildings needed to be closed in the future.

4. It would endorse the concept of moving to a middle school, graded six through eight, in the future.

5. The administration should develop a curriculum for the middle school.

6. The administration, and those board members who were available, should meet with parents of Bach School students within the next two weeks.

During the public hearing, a member of the audience thanked board members for all the time they had put in on the future building needs decisions (Board of Education Minutes, October 18, 1982).

Summary

A number of factors led to the superintendent's recommendation to close two schools. The idea of closing a school first surfaced at a citizens meeting in 1980 and was formally proposed by the Citizens Financial Advisory Committee in 1981. While it was temporarily set aside in Eureka, other school districts in the state were exercising that option in response to declining enrollment and inadequate finances.

The new superintendent had closed an elementary school under similar circumstances in another district before coming to Eureka. Six months after joining the district, he developed a five year enrollment projection for the board and suggested that board members needed to consider closing a school because of anticipated, continued decline.

Executive order cuts, delays in state aid and a projected budget deficit for the coming year convinced board members of the seriousness of the financial situation. They directed the administration to open wage concession talks with the teachers' association in hopes of avoiding further program cuts. The request was ultimately rejected by the association in August.

In July, the superintendent recommended that two elementary schools be closed and that the sixth graders be moved to the junior high, creating a middle school. The board scheduled public hearings at each of the seven elementary schools during the month of September so that members of the community could have an opportunity to comment on the recommendations.

At the October 4 board meeting, the superintendent changed his recommendation in view of unexpectedly high enrollments at the junior high and high school and in response to community objections to the middle school. He revised the number of schools to be closed from two to one and indicated there would not be room at the junior high for the sixth graders. After much discussion at several board meetings, the Board of Education voted to close Bach School at the end of the 1982-83 school year.

CHAPTER FOUR

ORGANIZATIONAL DECISION MAKERS RESPOND TO ENVIRONMENTAL DECLINE

Theoretical Perspectives

Causes of Decline

Levine

According to Levine (1978), the causes of decline can be classified into four categories, depending on whether they are external or internal to the organization and whether they are political or economic/technical in nature. The four categories are problem depletion, environmental entropy, organizational atrophy and political vulnerability.

Problem depletion includes problems that have been solved or reduced by demographic changes, such as declining enrollments. Environmental entropy is the erosion of the environment's ability to support the organization at its previous level. (Reduction in state aid to school districts would be one example.) Organizational atrophy is poor management. Political vulnerability is an organization's inability to prevent budget cut backs and program contractions demanded by the environment. This vulnerability is due to a lack of expertise and to poor management of the

organization in the past.

Jick and Murray

Jick and Murray (1982) limit their discussion of the causes of decline to funding reductions in the public sector. According to their model, the specific responses chosen by the top decision makers of the organization are a function of the type of decision making process attributed to the outside funding agency.

Zammuto and Cameron

Zammuto and Cameron (1983) assume that decline is a multi dimensional phenomenon which most often is a product of the environment rather than the organization. Thus, "decline is better conceptualized as environmental decline and organizational response" (p.3).

Two types of environmental change can lead to decline:

1. A reduction in the size of the niche due to declining availability of resources within the niche, a declining level of demand for goods or services and/or an increase in constraints that prevent certain activities.

2. A change in the shape of the niche, which results in a change in the type of organizational performance the niche will support. It is due to technological changes or a change in customer preferences.

In addition to the two types of niche changes which can occur, size and shape, there are two possible patterns of change in niche configuration. The pattern of change can be

continuous or discontinuous. A continuous change is one that is consistent with past experience while a discontinuous change is one that is a significant deviation from the past. Organizations have more opportunity to adapt to change which is continuous than to that which is discontinuous. Therefore, organizations are often affected differently by environmental decline, depending on the pattern of change.

Zammuto and Cameron's typology of environmental decline is based on the two types of change in niche configuration, size and shape, and on the two patterns of change, continuous and discontinuous (see Figure 11). Four types of decline: erosion, contraction, dissolution and collapse, can occur as a result of the four different combinations of the two variables.

That is, an organization experiencing a continuous change in the size of its niche is experiencing erosion; one that is experiencing a discontinuous change in the size of its niche is experiencing contraction. Dissolution occurs when there is a continuous change in the shape of the organization's niche. A discontinuous change in niche shape is known as collapse.

Responses by Organizational Decision Makers and Others

Levine

Levine (1978) notes that the top management of organizations may choose the strategy of resisting decline

Continuity of Environmental Change

Type of Change in Niche Configuration	Continuous Change	Discontinuous Change
Niche Size	Erosion	Contraction
Niche Shape	Dissolution	Collapse

Figure 11

A Typology of Environmental Decline

Note. From "A Typology of Environmental Decline and Organizational Response" by R. Zammuto and K. Cameron, 1983, p.50. Copyright 1983 by R.Zammuto and K. Cameron. Reprinted by permission.

or smoothing it. He has devised a model which matches specific strategies with particular categories of decline (see Figure 12). For each category of decline (problem depletion, environmental entropy, political vulnerability and organizational atrophy), there are a number of tactics that organizational decision makers might use in response to decline. Those tactics are further divided into two groups: those that might be used to resist decline and those that could be used to smooth decline, i.e. to adapt the organization to decline.

Sometimes, different levels of the organization may adopt different strategies. Top management may opt for smoothing decline by contraction of the organization. Subunits, on the other hand, would be expected to resist decline in the interests of survival.

Organizations also have to choose the basis on which they are going to cut back, if they choose that strategy. That is, cuts may be made on the basis of equity or efficiency. Equitable cuts are made "across the board". All employees are equally likely to be hurt and cuts are made without regard to their long-run effects on the organization. Efficiency cuts try to minimize the damage to the organization in the long-run by cutting out weaker, inefficient programs, without regard to equity of distribution. Equity cuts are easier for management to make since they are socially acceptable, easier to justify and

	<u>Tactics to Resist Decline</u> (Problem Depletion)	<u>Tactics to Smooth Decline</u>
External Political	1. Diversify programs, clients and constituents 2. Improve legislative liason 3. Educate the public about the agency's mission 4. Mobilize dependent clients 5. Become "captured" by a powerful interest group or legislator 6. Threaten to cut vital or popular programs 7. Cut a visible and widespread service a little to demonstrate client dependence	1. Make peace with competing agencies 2. Cut low prestige programs 3. Cut programs to politically weak clients 4. Sell and lend expertise to other agencies 5. Share problems with other agencies
Economic/ Technical	(Environmental Entropy) 1. Find a wider and richer revenue base (e.g., metropolitan reorganization) 2. Develop incentives to prevent disinvestment 3. Seek foundation support 4. Lure new public and private sector investment 5. Adopt user charges	1. Improve targeting on problems 2. Plan with preservative objectives 3. Cut losses by distinguishing between capital investments and sunk costs 4. Yield concessions to taxpayer and employers to retain them

Figure 12
Some Cutback Management Strategies

Note. From "Organizational Decline and Cutback Management" by C.H. Levine, 1978, Public Administration Review, 38, p.321. Copyright 1978 by Public Administration Review. Reprinted by permission.

	<u>Tactics to Resist Decline</u> (Political Vulnerability)	<u>Tactics to Smooth Decline</u>
Internal Political	1. Issue symbolic responses like forming study commissions and task forces 2. "Circle the wagons," i.e., develop a siege mentality to retain esprit de corps 3. Strengthen expertise	1. Change leadership at each stage in the decline process 2. Reorganize at each stage 3. Cut programs run by weak subunits 4. Shift programs to another agency 5. Get temporary exemptions from personnel and budgetary regulations which limit discretion

Figure 12 (cont'd.)

<u>Tactics to Resist Decline</u>		<u>Tactics to Smooth Decline</u>
Economic/ Technical	(Organizational Atrophy)	
	1. Increase hierarchical control	1. Renegotiate long term contracts to regain flexibility
	2. Improve productivity	2. Install rational choice techniques like zero-base budgeting and evaluation research
	3. Experiment with less costly service delivery systems	3. Mortgage the future by deferring maintenance and downscaling personnel quality
	4. Automate	4. Ask employees to make voluntary sacrifices like taking early retirements and deferring raises
	5. Stockpile and ration resources	5. Improve forecasting capacity to anticipate further cuts
		6. Reassign surplus facilities to other users
		7. Sell surplus property, lease back when needed
		8. Exploit the exploitable

Figure 12 (cont'd.)

involve lower decision making costs.

Levine's model of administrative responses to fiscal stress (1981) is based on a review of the literature and the New York City experience (see Figure 13). Levine uses the model to make predictions which link the type of change in resource level with characteristics of the political structure (i.e. formal authority structure and interest group structure), administrative responses or strategies and outcomes. For example, organizations experiencing moderate decline (resources do not cover the inflationary rise in program costs) will be characterized by weak central control and interest groups will be fragmented but active. Strategies adopted by the administration will be those of stretching (attempting to do more with less) and resisting. Cuts will be across the board, rather than targeted. There will be no major shifts in the balance of power among interest groups and departments. The model was generally supported by the data (four case studies of local governments' attempts to manage fiscal stress).

In his typology of organizational responses to resource level changes (1979), Levine explains the differences in organizational responses to resource level changes (see Figure 14). The degree of open-ness to interest groups determines the content of the organization's strategy, and the degree of centralization of formal authority determines the degree to which that strategy is implemented. The more

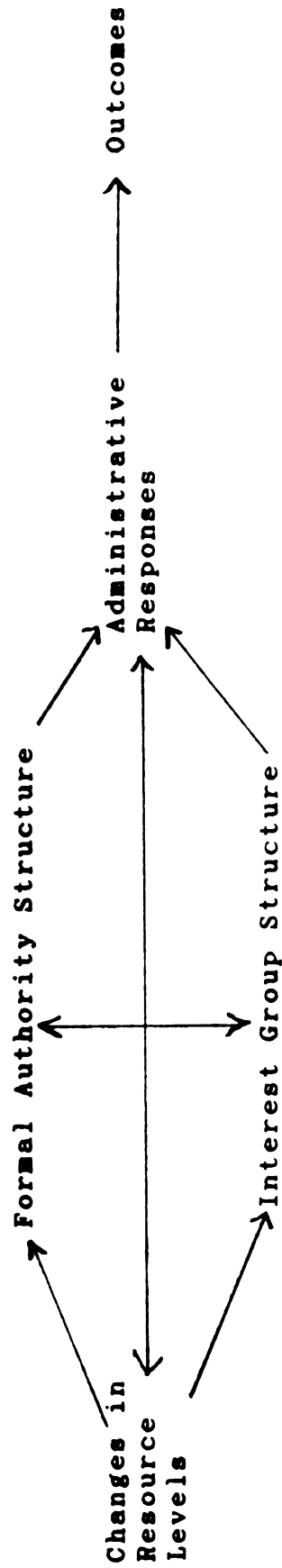


Figure 13

Administrative Responses to Fiscal Stress

Note. From The Politics of Retrenchment (p.35) by C.H. Levine, I.S. Rubin and G.G. Wolohojan, 1981, California: Sage Publications, Inc.. Copyright 1981 by Sage Publication, Inc.. Reprinted by permission.

Centralization of Formal Authority

High				Low	
Openness to Interest Groups	High		Interest group strategy implemented	Interest group strategy not implemented	
	Low		Managerial strategy implemented	Managerial strategy not implemented	

Note. Openness to interest groups is a function of the politization of the environment.

Figure 14

Typology of Organizational Responses to Resource Level Changes

Note. From The Politics of Retrenchment (p.206) by C.H. Levine, I.S. Rubin and G.G. Wolohojan, 1981, California: Sage Publications, Inc.. Copyright 1981 by Sage Publication, Inc.. Reprinted by permission.

politicized the environment, the more open the organization's administration will be to interest groups. Thus, if it is open to interest groups, the administration's strategy will reflect the interest group's priorities (across the board cuts or cuts based on political criteria) rather than managerial priorities (targeted cuts based on technical criteria). The more centralized the formal authority structure, the more likely that the strategy (whatever its content) will actually be implemented.

Jick and Murray

A model developed by Jick and Murray (1982) provides a framework for analyzing organizational responses to funding reductions in the public sector (see Figure 15). There are two basic sets of outcomes: strategic decision responses made by the organization's top management and the crisis syndrome behavior exhibited by the rest of the organizational members in response to those decisions.

Strategic decision responses. Strategic decision responses may be external or internal. External responses are the choices of what to do, if anything, to cause existing providers of funds to cease cutting or to cause new providers to make up the difference. Internal responses are those regarding who or what to cut.

The choice of specific external and internal strategic responses is a function of whether top decision makers believe the causes of the reduction in funding are rational

Crisis Behavior Dynamics

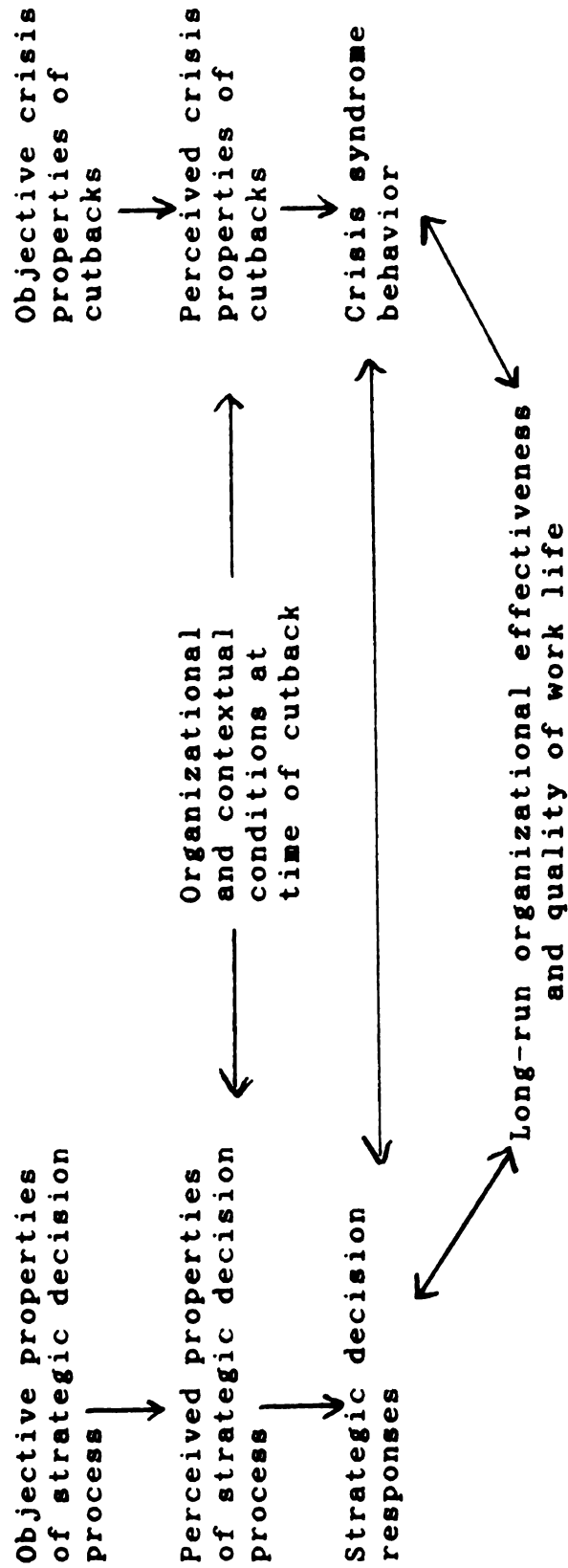


Figure 15

Organizational Responses to Funding Reductions

Note. From "The Management of Hard Times: Budget Cutbacks in Public Sector Organizations" by T.D. Jick and V.V. Murray, 1982, Organization Studies, 3, p.143. Copyright 1982 by Organization Studies. Reprinted by permission.

or political. If the cuts are believed to be the result of a political decision, then the perceived power situation becomes relevant. Whether the decision making process used by resource providers is perceived as being rational or political is influenced by the "objective" properties of the strategic decision process, characteristics of the organization's structure and environment, and the personalities of the key actors.

Choice of external strategies. If top decision makers believe that those who reduced the organization's funding did so on rational grounds and were correct in their assessment that the organization needed less money, due to declining enrollment, for example, then the external strategy is one of acceptance, with all energy being devoted to implementing the necessary cuts. If, however, top management believes that the decision making process was rational but that the conclusion was incorrect because those who decided to reduce funding had faulty data or interpreted it incorrectly, then the external strategy will be one of convincing the funding agency of its error by providing "correct" data which leads to "correct" conclusions.

If, on the other hand, strategic decision makers believe that the funding source does not share the focal organization's objectives or is being forced to make budget cuts by powers beyond its control, then a number of responses are possible. Since the objectives of the funding

agency and the focal organization are not perceived to be the same, simply providing more facts or being persuasive is not viewed as an appropriate response. Rather, the funding agency must be forced into making concessions through the use of power. Acceptance of the funding agency action will occur only if the strategic decision makers believe they do not have enough power, acting alone or in concert with others, to bring about such a capitulation. If decision makers believe they control outcomes which are important to the funding source, then they will try to use those outcomes to obtain concessions from the funding source. Threats to reduce services to clients so as to politically embarrass the funding source would be an example. Instead of this direct confrontational approach, the external strategy might be one of forming coalitions with similar organizations or of using the media to build public support for their cause.

Choice of internal strategies. It is probable that if decision makers perceive the decision making process used by external providers as being rational, that they will perceive the internal decision making process as being rational, also. If strategic decision makers choose to use a rational approach to the internal management of the organization, then they will choose a method such as "Zero Base Budgeting", or "Planning, Programming, Budgeting Systems". Such a method allows one to identify and rank organizational objectives and then eliminate those programs

which contribute least to the top-ranked objectives. Decision makers may involve the participation of others in the decision making process if they perceive they have insufficient power. Decision makers may choose a delay strategy if they believe they have insufficient information on which to base cutback decisions. In that case, decisions will be postponed until adequate data is gathered.

Which particular strategies are chosen if decision makers accept the political paradigm, is affected by their perceptions of their relative power vis-a-vis other elements in the organization. Passivity occurs if top management believes it has low power vis-a-vis the funding agency and must simply pass along the cuts as dictated by the funding agency. Abdication, shifting the responsibility for deciding on cuts to others, is often chosen if top management believes it politically risky to make the decision because of potentially negative outcomes. An across the board strategy for making cuts or one of delay will be chosen if decision makers perceive they are unable to placate a variety of powerful interest groups, or if they wish to avoid conflict within the organization. Severe cuts to the weakest units or to important programs as a threat to the external funding source will be the chosen strategy if decision makers perceive their power position as being high in relation to other internal units.

Crisis syndrome behavior. How the rest of the organization responds to the strategic decision responses made by the organization's dominant coalition is a function of the crisis like properties of those responses, that is of the cutbacks in organizational activities. Hermann (1969) has defined a crisis as a situation that threatens important goals (that is, severity) and which occurs suddenly with little response time available (that is, time pressure). If organizational members perceive cutbacks as having crisis like qualities, their responses tend to follow a pattern of initial shock (numbed inaction) followed by defensive retreat (denial, refusal to change). These responses Jick and Murray have labelled the "crisis syndrome". In organizations, the crisis syndrome results in withdrawal behavior (reduced productivity, increased absenteeism and turnover); increased interorganizational conflict; reduction in communication channels; centralization, and lowered performance standards (Hermann, 1963). Organizational members' perceptions regarding the crisis like properties of cutbacks are influenced by the "objective" crisis properties of cutbacks as well as by certain organizational and contextual conditions. These conditions include:

1. The extent to which the organization is connected to an interorganizational network and the extent to which the cutbacks are part of a general trend since both these aspects affect the level of "surprise".

2. Personality characteristics of decision makers. Those who are inexperienced in making budget cuts and/ or have Type A personalities are more likely to perceive cutbacks as crises.

3. Goal clarity and centralization of authority. Both factors affect the perception of warning signs.

Zammuto and Cameron

Looking at the organizational level of analysis, Zammuto and Cameron (1983) describe two types of organizational responses to decline: structural adjustments and strategic responses. Structural adjustments are internal changes in the arrangements and methods of operation. They may vary in scope from small or incremental changes to major or complete realignments. There are also different types of adjustments that might be made. They are: change by deletion (eliminating activities), change by substitution (replacing activities), change by addition (increasing activities) and change by distribution (relocating activities).

Strategic responses focus on the environment outside the organization and are an attempt to affect the major domains in which the organization operates. The five types of strategic responses available to an organization are:

1. Domain defense: preserving the legitimacy of a current domain by generating coalitions of support among key resource providers.

2. Domain offense: generating organizational slack by

expanding the current level of an activity that an organization does well.

3. Domain consolidation: reducing the size of a domain by eliminating peripheral activities.

4. Domain creation: supplementing current domains with completely new domains.

5. Domain substitution: replacing one domain with another. The appropriate strategic response will vary, depending not only on the type of environmental decline experienced, but also on whether or not the decline was predicted in advance (see Figure 16).

Zammuto and Cameron maintain that while organizations may utilize a variety of responses to decline, which of the structural adjustments and strategic responses used by the organization are effective in enhancing organizational viability depends on the type of environmental decline they are experiencing: erosion, contraction, dissolution or collapse. For example, an organization experiencing erosion (a continuous change in the size of its niche) should adjust its structure by making small, incremental changes and by redistributing activities. If the decline had been predicted, domain offense would be appropriate. If not, then domain consolidation would be the effective strategic response.

<u>Type of Change in Niche Configuration</u>		<u>Continuity of Environmental Change</u>	
		<u>Continuous Change</u>	<u>Discontinuous Change</u>
Niche Size	EROSION		
	<u>Structural Adjustments</u>		<u>CONTRACTION</u>
			<u>Structural adjustments</u>
	* Change by redistribution * Small, incremental changes (fine-tuning) <u>Strategic Responses</u> * Predicted: Domain offense * Not Predicted: Domain consolidation		* Change by deletion * Substantial across-the-board or selective cutbacks <u>Strategic Responses</u> * Predicted: Domain defense * Not Predicted: Domain consolidation

Figure 16

Organizational Level Responses to Environmental Decline

Note. From "A Typology of Environmental Decline and Organizational Response" by R. Zammuto and K. Cameron, 1983, p.52. Copyright 1983 by R. Zammuto and K. Cameron. Reprinted by permission.

<u>Type of Change in Niche Configuration</u>		<u>Continuity of Environmental Change</u>	
Niche Shape	Continuous Change	Discontinuous Change	
	<u>DISCONTINUITY</u>		
	<u>COLLAPSE</u>		
	<u>Structural Adjustments</u>	<u>Structural Adjustments</u>	
	* Change by addition * Search for new alternatives	* Change by substitution * Trial-and-error search for past solutions	
	<u>Strategic Responses</u>	<u>Strategic Responses</u>	
	* Predicted: Domain defense, then domain creation * Not Predicted: Domain substitution	* Predicted: Domain creation * Not Predicted: Domain substitution	

Figure 16 (cont'd.)

Pattern of Events

Causes of Decline

Levine

The decline experienced by the school district can be described by two categories from Levine's (1978) typology of decline: problem depletion and environmental entropy. The decline in enrollments, primarily due to demographic changes, resulted in a reduction of the problem. That is, there were fewer students needing to be educated. Reductions in state aid, local voters' reluctance to increase property taxes and rising costs caused environmental entropy, the erosion of the environment's ability to support the organization at its previous level.

Jick and Murray

The school district experienced reductions in funding by an outside agency, the state legislature, as described by Jick and Murray (1982). In addition, however, the district also experienced decreasing enrollment which reduced the level of services needed and the amount of funding provided by the state since state aid was tied to enrollment figures. This aspect of the decline phenomenon is not covered by Jick and Murray's model.

Zammuto and Cameron

As Zammuto and Cameron (1983) suggest, the decline experienced by the school district was an environmental

phenomenon and can be described as a change in the size or shape of the organization's niche. A reduction in the size of the niche is a decrease in the ability of the environment to support organizational activities. It results from declining demand for the organization's services and/or the declining availability of resources (Zammuto and Cameron, 1983).

While it is true that demand for the organization's traditional services (kindergarten through twelfth grade educational programming) decreased, the total level of resources did not. State aid decreases were more than made up for by increases in revenue from local property taxes. The problem was that costs were also increasing. Zammuto and Cameron's model would be more helpful if it defined a reduction in the size of the niche as a decrease in the ability of the niche to support the same level of services, rather than defining it as a decrease in the level of resources.

Zammuto and Cameron do address the issue of a change in the shape of the niche, that is, in the kind of activities it will support. A school district experiencing a decline in enrollment, i.e. decreasing demand for its services, appears to fit in the changing size of niche category as defined by Zammuto and Cameron. If there is increasing demand for other programming the organization might offer, however, such as day care and adult education, is the organization also

experiencing a change in the shape of its niche? A secondary question is, do the organization's decision makers have to be aware that the niche is changing shape in order for that to be a characteristic of the environmental decline being experienced?

The issue of how individuals perceive and make sense out of their environments will be addressed in Chapter Nine. For now, it would seem that decline should be broadly defined as a change in the size or shape of an organization's niche. A change in the size of the niche should be operationalized as a change in the ability of the niche to support previous programming levels. A change in the shape of the niche should be defined as a change in the demand pattern for an organization's product.

Responses by Organizational Decision Makers and Others

Levine

Levine (1978) suggests that the top management of organizations experiencing decline choose a strategy of resisting or smoothing decline. The school board chose first to resist decline by using some of the appropriate tactics for problem depletion and environmental entropy. That is, the board threatened to cut popular programs (athletics) and attempted to educate the public about the agency's mission by involving parents in millage task forces. When those tactics were not successful in resisting decline, the board

fell back on a strategy of smoothing decline. That is, it adopted such tactics as cutting programs to politically weak clients (reducing the amount of music, art and physical education in the elementary schools), and yielding concessions to taxpayers (asking for one year tax increases instead of three to five year increases).

Levine (1981) predicts that under moderate decline an organization will make across the board, equitable cuts because interest groups will be strong enough to prevent them from doing otherwise. The board attempted to make targeted cuts by reducing the hours of school secretaries and the level of athletic programming. In both cases, however, interest groups were able to prevent those targeted cuts from being implemented. In one instance, the members of the board were able to implement a targeted cut: the closing of a school. While there was an interest group who opposed the closing, it did not have enough power to prevent the board's decision from being implemented.

Zammuto and Cameron

Zammuto and Cameron (1983) suggest that an organization will be effective to the extent that the correct response is chosen, given the type of enviornmental decline an organization is experiencing. If an organization is undergoing a reduction in the size of its niche and if the pattern of the change is discontinuous, then the type of decline being experienced is contraction. In 1980-81, school

district revenues increased at a rate of five percent over the previous year but salary costs increased eight percent and the inflation rate was 12.5 percent. This was a significant difference from the preceeding year and therefore the type of decline being experienced was contraction. The appropriate response, according to Zammuto and Cameron, is change by deletion and substantial across-the-board or selective cutbacks. If the change were predicted ahead of time, the organization would be expected to engage in domain defense, if not, domain consolidation.

During the 1980-81 fiscal year, the board did change by deletion, cutting \$500,000 in programming from the budget. It attempted to make both selective and across-the-board cutbacks. Interest groups were able to prevent the implementation of selective cutbacks, however. A boosters club pledged funds for the support of athletics and persuaded board members to rescind cuts in the athletic budget. Members of the secretarial union filed a grievance and were successful in preventing a reduction in their hours. Administrators invoked state law which required they receive a specified period of notice before being laid off by the board.

Whether or not organizational decision makers are successful in implementing across the board or selective cutbacks depends upon their power vis a vis the interest groups who will be affected. As noted earlier, Levine's

(1981) model speaks to the influence of interest groups on strategic responses made by the administration. He points out that under moderate decline, interest groups will be active and may be able to prevent targeted cutbacks, thus across the board cutbacks are more likely.

Zammuto, and Cameron suggest that domain defense, preserving the legitimacy of a current domain by generating coalitions of support among key resource providers, would be expected if the decline were predicted. Domain defense was attempted by the board when it requested a millage increase in August 1980. The voters rejected the proposal, however, and the board had to fall back on a strategic response of domain consolidation, reducing the size of the domain by eliminating peripheral activities. Reductions were made in elementary music, art and physical education and the high school day was shortened by one hour.

Thus, in addition to predicting the decline in advance, organizational decision makers need to have enough power to defend their domain. Prior knowledge is a necessary but insufficient requirement for domain defense to take place. If this alternative is not available to an organization, it must fall back on domain consolidation. Power is also important in implementing internal changes. Interest groups may have enough power to prevent selective cutbacks so that organizational decision makers are forced to use across-the-board delitions.

Another important factor is the cumulative effect of decline. Neither Zammuto and Cameron nor Jick and Murray address this issue. Levine (1981) suggests that when an organization experiences decline over a period of time, the legal authority of the formal authority structure may be strengthened. He does not address the other sources of power, however, or how the power relationship between the formal authority structure and various interest groups might change over time.

In August 1981, the new superintendent was able to reverse the outcome of a previous millage defeat by persuading voters to adopt a tax increase that they had turned down immediately prior to his joining the district. Additional significant cuts in programming were thus avoided.

The new superintendent's formal authority was not any greater than that of the previous superintendent. His referant power as a new superintendent who had been successful in managing decline in another district was definitely greater, however.

The following year, the board chose to close a school in response to decline rather than to attempt to raise taxes or to cut programs. This alternative was chosen even though it was a targeted cut because there seemed to be no alternative. Board members believed that voters would be unwilling to increase taxes any further. They were

personally opposed to cutting programs any more than they had already been cut and they believed that the majority of the community members felt the same way. The teachers' association refused to grant wage concessions. Closing a school seemed to be the only remaining alternative that would generate sufficient funds to cover the deficit.

Thus, previous organizational responses to decline, organizational decision makers perceptions concerning what powerful interest groups want and the decision makers' values, have an important influence on the current responses chosen and must be included in a model of decline.

Jick and Murray

Jick and Murray (1982) predict that the type of response chosen by organizational decision makers will depend on the decision making paradigm they attribute to those in the funding agency who decided to reduce the level of funds given to the focal organization. While the external strategy chosen by the school board was consistent with that prediction, the apparent internal strategy was not. Board members attributed a political paradigm to the outside funding agency. That is, they assumed that the state legislature's decision to cut funding to the local school district was not because state legislators had faulty data or because they thought that the district needed less money because of declining enrollment. Rather, board members believed that the legislature was being forced to make cuts

by powers beyond its control, the decreased amount of state revenues available for expenditure. Thus, as predicted by the model, board members did not try to influence the funding agency, the state legislature.

Jick and Murray suggest that the internal strategy chosen by organizational decision makers will probably be based on the same decision making paradigm as that attributed to the funding agency. Thus, if the decision making paradigm of the funding agency is believed to be political, then the internal strategy chosen by organizational decision makers would also be based on the political paradigm.

In fact, the school board acted as though their decision making paradigm was rational, not political. In deciding to close a school the reasons given for doing so were rational, i.e. to save money and to reduce the number of split classrooms. The choice of the particular school was also explained in rational terms, i.e. the number of walkers, the effect on the surrounding community, the age of the building, heating costs, etc.

A case could be made, however, that the actual paradigm used was political, not rational. Choosing to close a school because constituent groups prevented other solutions (voters were against increasing taxes, teachers refused to negotiate concessions, board members were unwilling to cut programs any further) is a political not a rational decision. The

choice of a particular school was based on political, not rational, criteria. As board members indicated, there were no compelling reasons for choosing one school over the other. Those affected by the decision needed to be given a rational explanation, however. As Thompson (1967) has suggested, people expect organizations to act in a rational manner. Thus, the vice president of the board sat down and constructed a rationale for the decision to close a particular school after the superintendent told her what his recommendation would be. Jick and Murray do not address this issue of managing group's reactions to strategic decision responses.

Thus, the external strategy chosen by the organizational decision makers is not only influenced by the amount of lead time they have before the decline takes place but also by their perceptions of the decision making paradigm used by outside agencies and of their power vis a vis the external agency. The internal strategy is influenced by the organizational decision makers' decision making paradigm and by their perceptions of the expectations of interest groups. If the paradigm is political, it must appear to be rational to minimize negative feedback from interest groups. Therefore, rational reasons for decisions will be given even if the real reasons are political in nature. This is one form of managing the reactions of interest groups.

Model

A model which reflects the writings of Levine (1981), Jick and Murray (1982), and Zammuto and Cameron (1983) as modified by the events which transpired on the site from July 1980 through October 18, 1982 appears in Figure 17. In the model, the dominant coalition refers to the board of education plus the superintendent, that is, the organizational decision makers. Interest groups are referred to as constituent groups.

Decisions by the dominant coalition in response to environmental decline are influenced by and in some cases have an influence on various factors or variables. The decisions are of two types: external strategies which attempt to affect the organization's domain, and internal strategies which try to influence the structure of the organization itself.

Environmental decline is a reduction in the size or a change in the shape of the organization's niche. The former is a decrease in the ability of the niche to support previous programming levels. The latter is a change in the demand pattern for an organization's product. The size of the niche can be influenced by the dominant coalition's actions, such as lobbying legislators to increase funding or persuading voters to increase property taxes.

Previous decisions by the dominant coalition influence what decision alternatives are currently available. Past

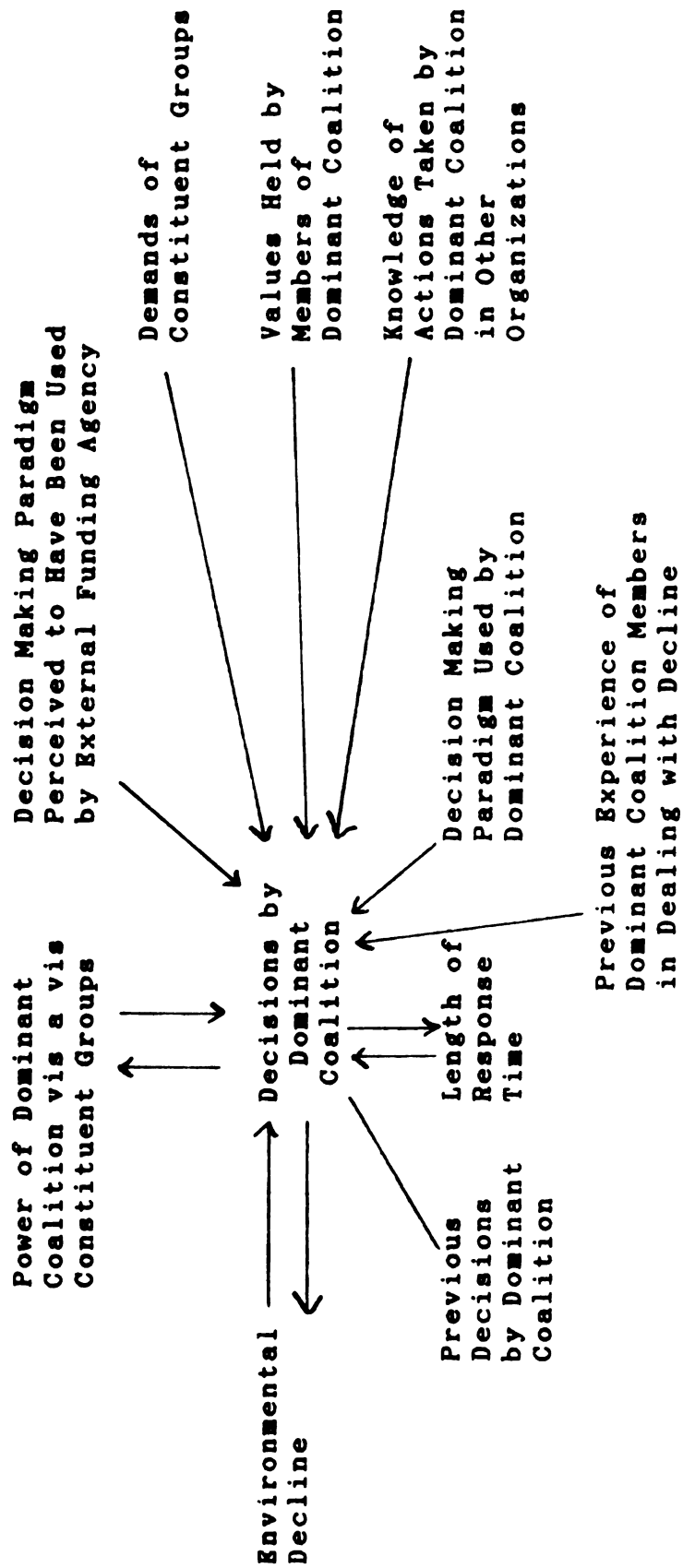


Figure 17

Model

decisions may serve as a constraint or may create opportunities. Previous increases in property taxes to the maximum level acceptable to the voters constrains the dominant coalition from raising taxes as a current solution. Former actions which established good rapport with legislators may create opportunities for effective lobbying in the present.

Length of response time limits the kind of decisions the dominant coalition can make. A preferred strategy of domain defense may have to be foregone because of the lack of time needed to generate support among key resource providers. The dominant coalition may lengthen the response time by adopting short term solutions, such as postponing maintenance projects.

Previous experience of dominant coalition members in dealing with decline affects the set of decision alternatives available to and implemented by members of the coalition. A superintendent who had successfully closed a school in response to declining funds and students in another district would probably recommend a similar action under similar circumstances in the focal organization.

Knowledge of actions taken by dominant coalitions in other organizations affects the set of decision alternatives available to members of the coalition. As members of the coalition become aware of school closing decisions made in other school districts, closing a school

becomes a decision alternative to be considered.

Decision making paradigm used by the dominant coalition influences the internal strategic decisions made by the coalition. If the coalition were using a rational paradigm, it would employ such techniques as program budgeting in order to make cuts on a rational basis. The use of a political paradigm would lead to targeted cuts of politically weak units or across-the-board cuts.

Values held by dominant coalition members impact their decisions. The board member who believes that teachers are over paid suggests that the staff should make wage concessions whenever the district is in trouble financially. When the curriculum has been cut to the point where board members believe it cannot be cut any further without serious consequences, they look for other ways to balance the budget.

Demands of constituent groups influence the choice of decision alternatives made by dominant coalition members as well as the explanation given for the choice. The board members' decision not to ask for more millage to balance the budget because they believe the voters are unwilling to approve a tax increase is an example. The attempts by the superintendent and the vice president to give rational arguments for closing a particular school are an example of the need to meet constituent groups' demands for rationality.

Decision making paradigm perceived to have been used by external funding agencies influences the strategies chosen by the dominant coalition. If the paradigm is believed to have been rational, additional factual information is supplied to the funding agency or the agency's decision is accepted. If the paradigm is believed to have been political, the dominant coalition will attempt to force the funding agency to change its decision if it believes it has enough power to do so.

Power of dominant coalition vis a vis constituent groups affects the coalition's choice of a particular strategy and its ability to implement that strategy. Board members' recognition that they would not be successful in persuading voters to increase taxes is an instance where the power of a constituent group precluded the dominant coalition from choosing a particular strategy. The board could not implement its strategy of reducing personnel costs by obtaining wage concessions from its employees because it did not have the power to force the unions to make concessions.

CHAPTER FIVE

PINS CHALLENGES BOARD'S DECISION TO CLOSE BACH SCHOOL

Although members of the community initially appeared to be resigned to the board's decision to close Bach School, an opposition group eventually developed. The group called themselves Partners In the Neighborhood School (PINS). The individuals who played an important role in opposing the school board were Tom and Jane Allison, members of PINS, and Bill Martin, PINS' lawyer.

Tom and Jane Allison were two of the six founders of PINS. Tom Allison, who had grown up in Eureka owned a sporting goods store. He and his wife lived near Bach School, which their children attended. According to Allison, his wife started the group because she felt someone had to do something about the board's decision to close Bach School. She invited two other couples to their home one evening to talk about what could be done. Although he had "never done anything like this before", Tom Allison was chosen spokesman for the group. While Jane Allison had no official title, she was often quoted in the newspapers and seemed to play a strong, if less formalized role.

Bill Martin was a lawyer who had worked for the college in an administrative position. His job had been eliminated

by college officials in an economy move necessitated by a reduction in state funding. Martin objected to the college's action and called a meeting of administrative professionals at the Holiday Inn to organize opposition. The first meeting was publicized in the student newspaper, but apparently nothing came of his efforts. Although he did not live in the school district at the time of his association with PINS, he had grown up in Eureka and was a former student of the man who was assistant superintendent at the time of the study. Martin had had little experience as a practicing lawyer at the time he was hired by PINS.

Initial Reactions to Board Decision

Surprise and Disappointment

A front page article about the school closing appeared in the local paper several days later. The reporter noted that,

There was surprise and disappointment Tuesday but no strong vocal opposition among Bach Elementary School parents and teachers to the school board's decision Monday to close the school.

Bach students, however, said they did not want to see the building closed. Many said they would miss their friends, their teachers and their principal.

"We're all waiting to see where they'll put our children," said one Bach mother. "The superintendent says there's no difference in schools, but when you've lived in this town a few years, you know that there is. I don't see the necessity of closing a school now."

But, most other Bach parents contacted Tuesday said they did indeed understand the problem of declining enrollments and tight finances - two primary reasons for the closing. "People have to realize that

Michigan is in bad shape and people are kidding themselves if they think the money is out there," said one mother. "It isn't. Selecting Kinney was probably a pretty logical choice. But, my biggest concern is the atmosphere of the school where my children will be placed. Kinney had such a good progressive atmosphere. The staff was interested in children. We felt good about the principal and teachers."

Bach teachers also commented on the special atmosphere at the school. "The staff rapport is very special; the support of parents had been very obvious to us," said a sixth grade teacher.

Several Bach teachers said the selection of Bach was a surprise to them. "I suppose that was wishful thinking, but I didn't think it'd be Bach," said a teacher of first and second graders.

The president of the teachers' union said that their overriding concern is that the transition to new schools for both students and teachers be smooth.

By lunch time Tuesday, about a dozen parents had talked with the principal about the closing. "Parental reaction is rather limited. I think what happened is the case (for a closing) was presented so clearly - the board had obviously done its homework - what could the public say," the principal said.

By Tuesday afternoon, the superintendent said he had received no calls from parents regarding the closing. "I have to assume the meetings we held were informative and people did understand the direction the district was going in," he said (Morning News, October 20, 1982).

Other parents quoted in a campus newspaper commented as follows:

I feel everybody was very well informed and all the reasons given for closing were good. Knowing that a decision had to be made...it really shouldn't matter (which building). I'm not upset.

I feel the worst thing about it is that such a good staff and principal will be broken up. Bricks and mortar don't mean that much (Central Life, October 20, 1982).

Newspaper Editorial: "No Organized Opposition"

Three days after the decision was made, an editorial regarding the decision appeared in the local paper.

Since the Board of Education voted Monday to close Bach

Elementary - the first school in the district to fall victim to enrollment loss and tight money - the reaction has been much more subdued (than in other school districts in Michigan). There's disappointment, surprise, even anger. But, there's no hint of a community outpouring or organized opposition. The mood appears to be one of understanding. Certainly the outcry which followed school closings announcements in other communities across the country is not forming here.

The lack of organized opposition was attributed to two factors:

1. Residents were aware of statewide trends in declining enrollment and shrinking state aid for education.

2. The Board of Education used an "upfront" approach in informing the community. It sought community "input" and put the facts on the table, meeting with parents at each elementary school in the district. There were no surprises except for the announcement of the actual school to be closed.

Why close the school now - especially if the district isn't going to sell it? There's one reason and it's a big one. Money. To keep Bach School open, the district would have had to request additional school millage, a tax increase many people would be unwilling or unable to support; or cut about \$100,000 in programming, a move which would be detrimental to education and would affect many more students more adversely than the closing will. Subject to an unexpected boost in enrollment or an unforeseen hike in state aid, we support the decision to close Bach (Morning News, October 21, 1982).

The following day, a Bach family wrote a letter to the editor protesting that, "Bach parents do care about their school's being closed. But, as the superintendent has told us repeatedly, there is nothing we can do" (Morning News,

October 22, 1982).

Sadness

That afternoon the principal of Bach School sent the following letter home to parents in the school newsletter.

It is with very mixed emotions that I write this newsletter. You no doubt are aware by now that the Eureka Board of Education last Monday evening accepted and approved a recommendation to close Bach School, effective the 1983-84 school year. It has been an emotional week for all of us here at school. I'm sure that's true in your house as well.

Along with that sadness comes a good mixture of determination to make this year the best one yet. That determination is shared by all of us here at school. Our students are the first concern. I promise to you that we will do everything in our power to make the transition to another school as smooth and painless as possible for your children. We are already thinking of creative ways to do that later this year. We are certainly open to your suggestions along the way.

You've all heard "bad news - good news" jokes. Well, the bad news is... Bach School will be closed at the end of the school year. The good news is... there's another elementary school in our district that is prepared to offer your children the same educational opportunity that they had at Bach. Different teachers, different principal, yes. Nevertheless, the same curricular materials and same opportunities to learn. May I encourage you in due time to offer to your new school and its staff the same support you have given to us at Bach. And by the way, we do appreciate that support deeply.

So, let's make this year at Bach the best ever for our kids. Thanks for your help and support.

Sincerely,
Jack Wilson

Resignation

Another parent wrote to the paper several days later to explain why the decision to close Bach had not met with much opposition. In her opinion,

The decision to close Bach was made before the board meeting even took place. One person in the audience at

the October 18 board meeting said, "What's the use? Their minds are already made up." (Morning News, October 27, 1982).

Still another wrote,

Bach School is only a building but the atmosphere and love displayed by the principal and teachers cannot be duplicated....We are afraid the superintendent and the school board only looked at bare facts, not those things that are essential to developing well-rounded caring children (Morning News, October 28, 1982).

Board and PINS Stake Out Their Positions

Opposition Organized

Petition circulated. On the 27th of October, (nine days after the board decided to close Bach School), the first sign of opposition appeared. A woman in the Bach neighborhood began circulating a petition, asking the board to reconsider. She asked permission from the principal to have a table in Bach School during parent conferences (scheduled for that week). After consulting with the superintendent, the principal refused (October 29, 1982).

Opposition group meets. Two days later an article appeared in the paper announcing that,

An undetermined number of Bach Elementary School parents are expected to meet tonight to discuss the Board of Education's October 18 decision to close Bach School next fall due to declining enrollments.

According to one Bach parent, the session will be an opportunity for the parents to air concerns and to "get questions answered that we didn't feel were adequately answered."

However, the parent would not say whether or not school district officials would be present at the meeting. She also would not say specifically where and

when the parents will be meeting or how many parents are expected to attend.

Neither the superintendent nor the school board members had heard about the meeting." At this point, we don't want a lot of people to know about it," said one parent who asked to remain unidentified (Morning News October 29, 1982).

An article appeared in the local paper the following Monday, describing the meeting which had taken place the preceeding Friday.

Almost two weeks after the Board of Education's decision to close Bach Elementary School the fall of 1983, opposition to the move is gaining among parents of Bach students.

About twenty parents met Friday night for four hours with a lawyer to discuss ways to stop the closing....The lawyer presented the group with four options: pursuing a lawsuit, circulating a petition, seeking a referendum and presenting the school district with alternatives to a school closing....The group, which includes parents of students from other elementary schools, have ruled out a lawsuit, but are investigating the other avenues of action....Mrs. Allison said the group believes that closing a school is not necessary and about \$100,000 - the amount district officials have said they expect to save through the closing - can be cut in other areas.... In addition, the group is claiming that closing Bach will lower property values in the immediate neighborhood of the school.

Mrs. Allison said no school district officials had been invited to Friday's meeting, but the group was considering inviting the superintendent or other district officials to the group's next meeting.

She said neither she nor her husband had attended any of the ten school board meetings where the possibility of school closings was discussed, but she said other members of the group had.

When asked why her group had not made their concerns known earlier, she said it was hard for people to be concerned over a "vague" recommendation.

"I know I've heard rumors of closings for over a year," she said. "First there was a recommendation for two closings and moving the sixth graders to the intermediate school and then there was a recommendation to close one (school)."

Mrs. Allison said if Bach had not been the school chosen for the closing, the parents would still be

upset. "We're not out to close another school instead of ours," she said, "We're looking at alternatives" (Morning News, November 1, 1982).

The same day, a newspaper column was published questioning whether the board was being "penny-wise and pound-foolish" in closing Bach. Noting that many people in the community expected that it would be necessary for the board to close a second school in the near future, the columnist commented,

When and if that takes place it, (the second closed school) will be Tappan School. Both Bach and Tappan Schools are "inner city" or older neighborhood schools. As such, their closing or potential closing must be assessed from other standpoints as well as from the quite real facts of diminishing enrollment and shrinking educational funds....

No one can fault the sincerity of the Board of Education in this matter other than to say that a school closing is like that proverbial rock dropped in a pool. The ripple effect is one that touches a good many things and persons other than education.

The closure of a school and its implications for the broader strategy of community development and redevelopment is an issue that will touch far more of us than just those with children at Bach School.

True - these decisions are never made easily or without tears. However, are we being "penny - wise and pound - foolish"? Are we condemning our finest and most stately older neighborhoods to inevitable decay and destruction? (Morning News, November 1, 1982).

Board members invited to meeting by opposition group.

Later that same day, I received a phone call from Carol Benson inviting me to attend a parents' meeting at Bach School on the following Thursday. She urged me to read the columnist's article about closing Bach that had appeared in that morning's paper. When I got to the board meeting that night, I heard that other members had also been called. A

private discussion of how to respond occurred immediately following the meeting among various board members and the superintendent. These individual discussions included the following comments:

Allen: We shouldn't go. They should have come to the special meetings we had.

Kemper: If they want to have a referendum, that's their right. I don't see any reason for us to go.

Kirby: Someone should go. I don't think the whole board needs to.

Richards: At fist I thought we shouldn't go 'cuz they'll think we'll change our mind. But, I think Mark and Sue and I should go just to defuse the situation.

Smith: I would like to go. We'll just be listening. If we don't go, there'll be a letter to the editor that we refused to go. We're not going to change our mind or the decision we made.

Allen: I'm not going. They wouldn't leave their name when they called. They just left a message with my daughter. (November 1. 1982).

Board Plans for Implementation of School Closing

During the meeting, the board approved the superintendent's goals and objectives for 1982-83. One of those goals was to "implement building closing procedures", doing everything possible to "ensure a smooth transition for everyone involved in the closing of the elementary school". The "Fourth Friday Count" reflected a drop in enrollment of 87 students at the elementary level and a gain of 27 at the intermediate level (Board of Education Minutes, November 1, 1982).

The superintendent also reminded board members and any

interested persons in the audience of the meeting the school district would be having with Bach parents on November 16. The purpose of the meeting would be to go over the school closing and to answer any questions parents might have. A review of the names of those people who were in the audience that night revealed that no parents or teachers from Bach School or neighborhood were present (Board of Education Minutes, November 1, 1982).

Board and PINS Vie for Community Support

PINS Announces Plans for Opposing School Closing

The next morning, however, an article in the local paper described the group formed by "parents who were opposed to the closing of Bach School" and outlined their plans. "Calling their group, 'Partners In Neighborhood Schools' (they) set a public meeting for Thursday evening in the Bach School gym." They were considering a petition drive and asking community organizations to take a position on the closing. The Downtown Business Association (DBA) agreed to discuss the Bach closing at its next meeting. The DBA President said he placed the Bach closing on the organization's agenda to give the group an opportunity "to discuss whether we as an association want to take sides on a school closing. "Various members of PINS", according to Mrs. Allison, one of six parents behind the movement, "are

approaching community organizations, asking them to take a position on the Bach closing."

Superintendent Responds to PINS' Actions

When asked to comment on the group's actions, the superintendent said,

There would have been the potential for that type of reaction no matter what school would have been closed. There's bound to be people disappointed but how they deal with that is what's important.

The principal said he could not gauge how many Bach parents might be considered sympathetic to the parent's group. The superintendent did not foresee the board reversing its decision to close Bach but he did "foresee the board being willing to cooperate." (Morning News, November 2, 1982).

The superintendent also commented that the opposition should become more informed on why the school is closing. "I've talked with other Bach parents and they're disappointed, but in agreement with the closing" (Central Life, November 3, 1982).

Bach Parent Invites Community to PINS Meeting

A Bach parent wrote a letter to the editor that,

Closing Bach was too high a price to pay....Elementary schools are vital to keep these older neighborhoods growing with young families. It is almost a certain fact that these neighborhoods will deteriorate after the loss of elementary schools....Closing Bach now and probably Tappan in two years will affect all school children in Eureka in many ways. Redistricting means that not only will Bach children be moved to another school, but all children will face the possibility of being moved to a different school - no matter where they live....There will also be a shift of teachers and principals.

Now we have to ask - will all this trouble save us

any money?....The only possible way the school board could save money is by eliminating services. For example, they would eliminate a number of teachers and add five or so extra students to each classroom. That would bring the number in each room as high as 32 students.

I urge all parents and taxpayers in the district to attend the next meeting of Mrs. Allison's group. We need to find out more of what this school closing will mean to all residents of Eureka and we need to decide what we want to do about it. Please be concerned about our children's education and the future of the older neighborhoods in Eureka (Morning News, November 3, 1982).

Downtown Business Association Decides Not to Get Involved

The next day, the DBA President announced the association's decision not to take a position on the Bach Elementary School closing. However, several members of the association were appointed as liason between the DBA and PINS. The described purpose of the liason appointments was to "give input to PINS" (Morning News, November 4, 1982).

PINS Meeting

Board's president, vice president and superintendent decide to attend meeting. The day of the meeting at Bach School (November 4), the board president called me to say that he was in favor of the superintendent, he and I going to Bach that night "to calm the waters". He had told the superintendent it was the board's problem and that he (the superintendent) "should stay out of it" (November 4, 1982).

Audience: neighborhood residents. The audience seemed to be made up primarily of people who lived in the neighborhood surrounding the school. Very few parents of children who were bussed to the school from homes in the

country were present. Several in the audience had gone to Bach themselves, moved away and then had come back to the neighborhood because they wanted their children to go to school there. Approximately 10 of those in attendance were retired persons who lived in the neighborhood; several of them had taught at Bach School in the past (November 4, 1982).

Allison presents group's concerns and plans. The meeting was conducted by Tom Allison whom the original group of six parents had designated as their chairperson. He shared the following concerns of their group:

1. Adopting the middle school concept and closing schools might have been appropriate in the big city where the superintendent came from, but it was not appropriate in Eureka.

2. People were afraid to object before because they were afraid that if they did, their school would be closed. The board was using a "divide and conquer" strategy.

3. The board decision was not based on what people said at the hearings. One of the board members said at a public meeting, "only a minority of the people came to the hearings". "People didn't listen to us." Mr. Allison said.

4. It was a mistake to close Bach School. "We don't want it to happen again - we want to see that decision reversed if possible."

Mr. Allison outlined the group's plans for opposing the

board's decision and ways that others could help. The plan was to "correlate the facts" and present them to the school board at the November 16 meeting, asking for answers. (The November 16 meeting had been established by the board on October 18 for the purpose of answering Bach parents' questions.) The group had considered filing a lawsuit against the board but did not want to do that. Those who wanted to help were urged to sign up on a sheet that was being circulated.

Martin questions superintendent's projections. Next, the group was addressed by Mr. Martin the group's lawyer. He questioned the superintendent's enrollment projections, referring to the handout which had been distributed to members of the audience. According to the figures on the handout, enrollment in the elementary schools had increased by 67 students, rather than decreasing by 76 students, as the superintendent had projected.

Audience urged: ask board to delay. Mr. Martin suggested that the "first line of defense" was to "gather supporters" and then "go for reasonable goals". Supporters could be gathered by "coming to meetings and writing letters". A reasonable goal would be to tell the school board to keep the school open one year longer until the facts on the Michigan economy and the city's growth were known. People should talk to the school board members and the administration. They should keep schools open, even if

it costs money.

Martin suggests: sell relocatables. In considering alternative actions the board might take rather than closing Bach, Martin suggested that the board sell the district's 15 relocatable classrooms. (The "relocatables" or "portables", as they were sometimes known, had been purchased by the board at a time when the district was growing. Located at various school sites, only two were currently being used for classrooms.) Referring to a handout provided by PINS, Mr. Martin pointed out that 17% of available classrooms were relocatables. What the board should do, he suggested, is close those relocatables and sell them. (This was the first time the issue of relocatables surfaced in the school closing discussion. It was to appear again and again, with Mr. Martin insisting that the district should close the relocatables and sell them and the superintendent equally insistent that only two of the relocatables were being used for classrooms and that there was not much of a market for relocatables since so many districts were experiencing declining enrollments.) (Morning News, November 5, 1982 and Central Life, November 5, 1982).

Need for closing questioned. Other remarks made at the meeting centered on whether the school district actually would save the \$100,000 projected, if that amount of savings was really needed and why. The issue of whether or not enrollment would continue to decline in the district was

also raised (Morning News, November 5, 1982).

Feelings of betrayal and loss expressed. Many people in the audience expressed their emotional response to the board's decision.

I feel betrayed that the decision was made secretly and quickly.

I thought I was reading my obituary when I read in the paper that Bach would be closed.

We're killing something wonderful by closing this school.

Others observed that the board would not change its mind based on emotions, that the group would have to have "hard facts, for example, on cost savings and relocatables." (November 4, 1982).

Middle school opposed. Opposition to the middle school concept also surfaced during the meeting. A straw vote indicated that only one person present was willing to support the middle school concept. The others maintained that it would be a mistake to place the sixth graders in with seventh and eighth graders. As one said, "We're having a change in the educational system pushed down our throats."

Effect on neighborhood feared. Many were also concerned that closing the school would have a negative impact on the surrounding neighborhood. "The board looked at this in deciding not to close Grove Corners. They should have considered that (the effect on the neighborhood), when they looked at Bach, too" (November 4, 1982).

Formation of committee suggested. Several people said, that it was not that they were opposed to Bach being closed - they did not want any school closed. Their remarks were followed by loud applause from other people in the audience. Some suggested that a committee be formed "to investigate and provide their findings to the board. We should ask the community if they would be willing to support more millage instead of closing a school."

PINS criticized by Bach parent. When asked if anyone from the audience had any further questions, one mother who did not live in the neighborhood but whose child attended Bach responded,

I don't like the secrecy surrounding this organization (PINS) and the way it began. You should have given input at the hearings. Let's go in a more positive vein, and come up with other uses for Bach. The relocatables are not all being used so closing them will not save money. If the board were to reverse its decision now it would be unfair to the children (November 4, 1982).

Following the meeting, coffee and cookies were served. During that time, several people asked me why the board members had not responded during the meeting. I replied that we had not been invited to do so - that we were just there to listen. I urged them to come to the meeting on the 16th to get the answers to their questions (November 4, 1982).

At the conclusion of a conference with the superintendent, he mentioned that he had received a number of phone calls from Bach parents saying they were supporting the school district on the closing issue (November 5, 1982).

Superintendent Responds to PINS' Concerns

On November 8, the superintendent sent a letter to Bach parents responding to some of the concerns and misunderstandings which had been raised at the November 4 meeting. He urged them to attend the November 16 meeting (Letter to Bach Parents, November 8, 1982).

Several days later a Bach parent commented to me, "Other children better be moved, too. Not only Bach kids should be bearing the brunt of this" (November 10, 1982).

Allison Calls on Superintendent

On November 12, Mr. Allison met with the superintendent to say that PINS was concerned that he (the superintendent) was making all these decisions (to close schools and develop a middle school) and would then leave afterwards. The superintendent acknowledged that some superintendents did do this but it was not his intent to do so. For his part, Allison assured the superintendent that PINS was not going to recall the board nor file a lawsuit. They did have concerns for the board to consider: the added cost of transporting students, the decision to adopt a middle school and then do a study afterwards, and class sizes in the elementary schools after a building was closed (November 12, 1982).

PINS Threatens Board

The day before the special board meeting at Bach (it was designated as a special board meeting to demonstrate the

board's continuing support for its decision to close Bach) articles about PINS appeared in both the student and local newspapers. PINS continued to stress its concerns about the negative effect the school closing would have on property values in the area, while board members maintained that there would be no negative effect on the neighborhood since the building would not be closed and boarded up but would be used for another educational purpose. Meanwhile, the South Neighborhood Action Group (a group of people who had organized to preserve an older neighborhood at the other end of town, near Tappan School), had reportedly agreed to write to the board in support of the "neighborhood school concept" (Central Life, November 15, 1982).

PINS member, Tom Allison, said that a recall of the Board of Education, a court injunction or a petition requesting a vote on the closing of Bach Elementary were options that PINS might pursue if the board did not reconsider its decision to close Bach in the fall of 1983. "If we have to do that to get them (the board) to reconsider, we will. But, that will be a last resort." Mrs. Allison said that several of the 90 member PINS group would "be on hand" at both that night's board meeting and at the Tuesday meeting at Bach to "air their opposition" to the closing and to present alternatives to the closing. The group claimed that the board had blindly followed a "single, poorly prepared report" by the superintendent in closing the

school (Morning News, November 15, 1982).

Community Urged to Demonstrate Strength of Opposition

A letter to the editor in that morning's paper urged the community to,

request that existing information be validated by review and that other studies be done to confirm the closing of a school is needed at this time.... We elected the board to do our bidding, to take care of our interests. We voted to build the school, paid for the construction of the building, and have supported it for 50 years. To think that our community's commitment can be undermined without complete assurance that it is absolutely necessary is devastating. I urge people to attend the school board meeting on Tuesday, November 16, to make it clear that there are more than just a few parents to quell over this issue and that we are going to take an active part in determining the future of our neighborhood schools (Morning News, November 15, 1982).

Prior to the regular board meeting on November 15, one of the board members who lived across the street from Bach School told me his wife had received "a lot of irate phone calls that day" (November 15, 1982).

Martin Suggests New Alternative: Sell Central Office

During the public hearing section of the meeting on the 15th, PINS lawyer, Mr. Martin, addressed the board. He again raised questions about the validity of the superintendent's enrollment projections. He also suggested a new alternative to closing Bach. Instead, he proposed that the Central Administration Office building be closed and sold. The superintendent and his assistants could then move to Bach School. He asked if the school district's contract with the federal government could be modified to permit such

a sale. (The office building had previously been the local post office. The district had been leasing the building from the federal government since 1965.) "No", the superintendent replied, "it cannot be sold until ownership reverts to the district in 1985". Mr. Martin stated that he thought the board should delay its decision by one year and should conduct an "impact study" similar to the one used in a nearby town before they closed any schools. He continued by voicing his concern that the school closing "process had not been open and responsive" to the needs of Bach parents. Nothing the Bach parents could have said would have had any influence on the reasons given by the superintendent for closing Bach. He concluded his remarks by saying, "Please listen when you come to Bach tomorrow night" (November 15, 1982).

Plan for Redistricting Unopposed

The assistant superintendent presented alternative "redistricting of elementary school boundaries" which would replace the present plan when Bach School was closed at the end of the year. Bach students would be distributed to five of the six remaining elementary schools. Twenty-four Jones students would be moved to Wilkshire and six relocatables would be used (Board of Education Minutes, November 15, 1982). No one in the audience, which included some Bach parents, asked any questions or raised any objections to the plan (November 15, 1982).

The board was informed that the latest revision of the current year's budget projected an excess of expenditures over revenues, making it necessary to all but exhaust the district's fund equity balance. The \$599 projected cash balance would not be sufficient to cover the additional \$90,000 executive order cut being predicted by observers at the state capital (Board of Education Minutes, November 15, 1982). Each announcement of the district's financial condition strengthened the resolve of board members to close Bach in spite of the opposition being raised (November 15, 1982).

Several days later, a teacher expressed her concern about the Bach School closing to me. Since many of the staff currently teaching at Bach were the most senior teachers in the district, they would be bumping from the top of the seniority list. A long wave of bumping would result and some elementary teachers might end up at the intermediate school in positions for which they were "not really qualified" even though they met the state certification requirements (November 15, 1982).

Individual Board Members Threatened with Recall

The next day, a board member called me to say she had been contacted by a member of PINS about the possibility of being recalled. At the same time, the caller urged her to run again if she were recalled. From talking with other board members, it appeared that the same Bach parent had

contacted other board members, threatening them with recall, also. Neither the board president nor I were contacted, however (November 16, 1982).

Superintendent Explains Reason for Not Using Task Force

The superintendent told me that same day that "this flap over Bach" might be "partly his fault". He had deliberately chosen not to use a citizen task force to advise the board on which school to close because he had had an unhappy experience with that process in his previous school district. There, the task force spent two years working on the problem and never was able to come to any conclusions. The administration "finally had to take over (the task) and do it" (November 16, 1982).

Chamber Refers PINS Request

The superintendent also reported that the Chamber of Commerce had been contacted by PINS. The Chamber had referred the issue to the legislative committee, of which the superintendent was a member. The Chamber, he thought, did not think it was appropriate for them to take a position on the issue (November 16, 1982).

Community Member Urges Board to Reconsider

A letter to the editor in that morning's paper argued that closing Bach would affect many other people besides just the Bach students and their parents. The board and the superintendent "acted in good faith" according to the writer, but

they did not seem to have looked seriously enough at all the consequences of their decision....Those with pre-school children, those with post-elementary children, and even those with no children at all are affected as well, because closing an elementary school changes the character of a neighborhood....Still, every neighborhood has its own need for a school, and I do not want to argue that the school board should simply substitute another victim for Bach. It is the still secret decision to close a second elementary school that has me truly concerned. Every indicator - school board minutes, published remarks, casual comments by school board members - points to Tappan School as the next target. Should Tappan and Bach both be closed, the entire downtown area would be left without an elementary school....

So far as I can tell from the minutes of all the special school board meetings, the consequences or even the possibility of closing both downtown schools were never discussed. Yet, it is this decision that the school board seems poised to make.

I urge the board to reconsider its decision to close Bach School, to make all its future plans public, and to allow sufficient time for public debate - not on an abstract plan to close two hypothetical schools but on the board's actual plan made known in its entirety (Morning News, November 16, 1982).

Special Board Meeting at Bach School

Board and superintendent give rationale for closing.

Approximately 100 parents and other neighborhood residents attended the special board meeting at Bach School that evening. The board president reviewed the process by which the board had arrived at its decision to close Bach. The vice president gave the board's rationale for closing a school and reasons for supporting the superintendent's recommendation to close Bach. The superintendent presented the following plan for ensuring a smooth transition for everyone involved in the school closing.

1. All students scheduled to be in a new school the

following fall would visit that school before the end of the current school year.

2. Pen pals would be organized between incoming and current students in each school.

3. Transferred parents and students would receive a personal contact from their new principal.

4. Opportunities for new parents to meet parents already associated with the school would be arranged (Board of Education Minutes, November 16, 1982).

The assistant superintendent presented the recommended plan for redrawing elementary school boundaries. The plan had already been presented at the board meeting the previous night. The board was slated to take action on the proposal at the December board meeting. The board received no comments on the proposed boundaries from the audience (Board of Education Minutes, November 16, 1982).

Allison criticizes board. The meeting was then opened to anyone in the audience who had questions or comments regarding the closing. Mr. Allison spoke about PINS' concerns regarding the school closing's effect on the community. He called the board's attention to a "Neighborhood Unit Plan" which had been prepared for the City of Eureka Planning Commission by a planning consultant firm in 1977. Copies were distributed to board members, most of whom had neither seen nor heard about the plan before that moment (November 16, 1982). The plan had been reviewed

by the Eureka Public Schools before being adopted by the City Planning Commission in March 1977 (Summary, Neighborhood Unit Plan, March 1977).

The plan, as Mr. Allison pointed out, noted that the Bach neighborhood was "a small housing area" and "therefore any undesirable land use" would "affect a large portion of the neighborhood". The land use objectives for the neighborhood included, "encouraging the neighborhood to remain in a housing resource for families with school children, thus maximizing the use of Bach School" (Summary, Neighborhood Unit Plan, March 3, 1977).

Mr. Allison criticized the board for not considering the neighborhood plan nor the impact of the closing on the community. The superintendent pointed out that the plan was out of date, and that the projected population increase for the neighborhood and Eureka as a whole had not materialized (Central Life, November 17, 1982).

Mr. Allison asked the board if it had taken the impact on the community into consideration when it closed Bach and if an impact study would be conducted before the board closed a second school. He reiterated PINS' concern that closing the school would drive families with young children out of the neighborhood and that the older homes would then be used for student rentals and allowed to deteriorate. He pointed out that there were no churches or other civic buildings in the area to act as a focal point. Also,

factories would not want to locate in Eureka, he maintained (November 16, 1982).

Other members of the audience raised concerns about:
the increased use of relocatables,

I just can't see taking kids out of buildings and putting them in relocatables.

Close Central Office and move administrators into portables. If they're good enough for kids, they're good enough for the school board.

the middle-school concept,

The educational system is being shoved down our throats.

class size,

Parents want smaller classes.

the amount of time taken by the board in making its decision,

The board hasn't done enough studies.

You should have more exact figures.

Didn't you make a hasty decision?

the audience's inability to convince the board to reconsider,

This is insane - no one agrees with this plan - can't we do anything about it?

Any negative opinions expressed at the hearings regarding the closing were a minority viewpoint, according to one board member.

I wish I knew how to get the board to change its mind.

the board's hidden agenda,

There is an overall plan to overcrowd our schools so that we'll have to go to a middle school.

the choice of Bach rather than Grove Corners,

We're being penalized. We pass almost every millage, but, Grove Corners doesn't, and they get to keep their school. It's not fair!

current administrators and staff at Bach,

What plan is there for the administration and staff of Bach after its closed? (November 16, 1982).

Allison presents board with written demands. Mr.

Allison presented the following recommendations from PINS to the board, asking for a response in one week.

1. Cancel or delay for one year the closing of Bach School.

2. Close all relocatables.

3. Schedule a "genuine public discussion" on the neighborhood and middle school concepts.

4. "Get input from the business community and real estate professionals" on the value of neighborhood schools.

5. Make a study of the impact of closing a school on the community.

"Then with more facts, and the real (enrollment) numbers of 1985 in hand, a solution may be found supportable by all" (Morning News, November 17, 1982).

Board president resists. The board president agreed to schedule board discussion of PINS' concerns at the next scheduled board meeting on December 6, which would be in three weeks. He explained that board members could not meet before that because they would be busy attending various school holiday activities and programs (November 16, 1982).

Audience expresses frustration. Other comments made by members of the audience reflected their frustration.

The board should reconsider its decision. (Applause from audience.)

What the hell can the public do to keep this school open? When I think of the things this community has done to keep things together - its hard to believe we can't do this, too. Let's find out what needs to be done. Get a blue ribbon committee with people from the Chamber of Commerce and real estate. Over the years Bach has been low on the totem pole when it came to getting things. This (the school closing) is a bitter pill. What can we do to help keep this school open?

Bach isn't a building - it's a group of people and a spirit - I feel sad about losing that.

Straub: we hear you, but.... Straub who lived across the street from Bach School addressed the audience.

I've lived in this neighborhood all my life. I realize your concerns.... We can't speculate about the future. At the time the 1977 Neighborhood Unit Plan came out, enrollment in the public schools was at its peak. Everyone thought that the Eureka population was going to grow by leaps and bounds.... We need your input. Just because we don't agree with you it doesn't mean we don't listen. We have to look at the whole district's needs. We went into this with an open mind and will certainly consider what's been said tonight (November 16, 1982).

Principal: do not delay decision. The principal of Bach addressed members of the board,

Board, you can't keep stringing these kids along all year. We need time to help the kids get ready. Don't put off the decision until March. There won't be enough time to get ready. We need to know soon. They will handle the change, but they need time. You have to resolve this issue sometime soon.

His remarks were followed by applause from the audience. The board president assured the principal that the board would address the issue at its December 6 meeting and adjourned

the meeting (November 16, 1982).

PINS argues that non-Bach children will be affected.

Following the meeting, Mr. Allison distributed a flyer to board members which had been distributed by PINS to community members prior to the meeting. In the flyer, PINS argued that even those parents whose children did not attend Bach would be affected since, although "each step appears to affect only a fraction of the school system,...the end result is more busing, fewer neighborhood schools and a middle school developed without public debate."

The accuracy of the superintendent's enrollment projections was questioned and the use of portables rejected.

With predictions so wrong so quickly, it doesn't make sense to act on the old inaccurate projections....Why not get rid of the portables, thus reducing available classroom space equal to the decline in students and keep children in sound, brick buildings?

PINS' recommendations were listed and people were urged to help by:

1. Talking to board members (their names were listed).
2. Joining PINS. We hate to ask for a donation to keep your tax dollars focused on what they were intended for, but we will need donations. The administrators have budgets and staff to prepare and distribute their viewpoints, we will do the best we can with the resources available to us.
3. Attending the next meeting with the school board on November 16, at Bach School.

The flyer was signed by PINS which was defined as "Parents for Education in Neighborhood Schools" a change from its

original name, "Partners In Neighborhood Schools" (Handout prepared by PINS, November, 1982).

A parent whose child attended Jones School stopped me on the street several days later. She told me of her concern about the redistricting of elementary students necessitated by the closing of Bach School. She felt that the movement of "higher socioeconomic" parents to Wilkshire from Jones would hurt Jones School since those people were the ones who had served as room mothers, were active in the PTA and so forth (November 17, 1982).

Board Members and Superintendent Discuss Strategies

The board president called me the day after the special board meeting at Bach School. He suggested that we identify the "half-dozen or so hard-liners". He felt that while others were opposed to the decision they would "come around". Perhaps he, the superintendent and I ought to meet with those six and "give them a little extra attention" to "bring them around", he said. I agreed to think about it and to meet with him and the superintendent to decide what to do. We also discussed the role of the board vis-a-vis the superintendent and the community.

Smith: The superintendent is not used to having people in the community appeal administrative decisions to the board. If they do, he feels as though he has let the board down, that they shouldn't have to deal with these issues which he considers to be administrative. An example is the flap over the scheduling of extra curricular activities at the intermediate school. He realizes that the community seems to have a tradition of doing this but, he's "not sure it's right". I told him I thought it was "OK",

after all they elect the board and it (appealing to the board) is a way of holding the superintendent accountable.

Ferguson: You would agree with that - after all that's where you came from. (He was referring to my involvement as a community person in prior millages and the teacher strike.) But, I agree that it is appropriate.

Smith: Most of the people who come to the board meeting to complain are our supporters. They are just ticked off about a particular issue. We need them.

Ferguson: That's true.

Later that day, the superintendent and I discussed possible actions we might take. One possibility would be to poll the board members over the weekend to see what they thought should be done. He, the president and I could talk on Monday and then we could inform the board. He offered to talk to the board president. I agreed to review the neighborhood unit plan, and the superintendent said he would talk to the city manager about how they are currently using the plan. He reported that he had met with some community people that morning. One business man had told him.

I have been watching the process (used in deciding to close Bach). I have talked with other businessmen and they support the action. They have to do this in their own business - cut back when business is down (November 17, 1982).

Straub, a board member who lived in the Bach neighborhood, called me to talk about the recent board meeting at the school. He said he had not talked to people "who are effective barometers of how people in the

neighborhood feel," yet. One couple was really disgusted with him. He told them that "unless further study turned up something important," that "he would not change his decision". This issue is "quite emotional with them," he said. "They belong to a charismatic group - they're not rational." He indicated that he intended to talk to "some rational people" that weekend. "It's hard; you have to live with what you've said. Your statements can be misinterpreted." He had read the entire neighborhood plan report and he thought that Bach was the right school to close since that neighborhood had the smallest area and therefore the fewest number of residents would be affected. Actually, he observed, no matter which school we closed, we would be violating the plan, but closing Bach violated the plan the least (November 19, 1982).

He went on to report on his conversation with the city manager about a possible impact study. According to the city manager, such a study would cost \$4,000 - \$5,000 and would take 3-6 months to complete. It would preclude closing Bach this year. He said he doubted that such a study "would be valid" unless each part of the district were studied. That, of course, would be much more expensive and would take 18-24 months to complete. The city manager was of the opinion that the impact on the neighborhood would be the same, no matter which school we closed. However, if we closed both Bach and Tappan, it would be more damaging to the city's residential

area, than if we closed just one (November 19, 1982).

Straub said he was tempted to wait two years and then close two schools, and yet, "I don't want to go through this again right away. One part of me says do it and get it over with." If he were not on the school board he thought he would be opposed to the board's actions, but "we have to look out for the entire district". I mentioned my conversation with Professor Hecker at Michigan State University. He had assured me that property values would not go down when a school was closed. Straub suggested that I mention the fact that I had talked with someone outside the district because "people think the superintendent is trying to snow us" (November 19, 1982).

A letter from a parent in that morning's paper had commented on the board's action. "I believe the Board of Education has made a mistake in closing this fine building. There must be another answer elsewhere in saving costs" (Morning News, November 19, 1982). In that same paper there was an announcement that Bach students and staff members would be producing a memory book in recognition of the closing of their school. Residents were asked to contribute photographs of Bach activities and personnel for the book (Morning News, November 19, 1982).

Role of Board Members Questioned

The following morning the paper featured a front page story entitled, "Bach School Closing Raises Questions".

According to the reporter,

Whether the Board of Education spent enough time studying the impact of and alternatives to the fall 1983 Bach Elementary School Closing is at the heart of a controversy gaining momentum in Eureka....Closing a school is not a new concept in the state or even in the district. Dave Donovan, Director of Research at the State Department of Education, said school closings in Michigan are "very common"....Two of the reasons given for building closings are declining enrollments and lack of finances...the same reasons given by Eureka school officials for the Bach closing.

Suggestions of closing an elementary school were heard in Eureka as early as January 1981 when several board - appointed financial advisory committees, composed of citizens, school employees and board members, investigated possible ways to offset a projected \$760,000 budget deficit....PINS members have implied that the superintendent's projections are grossly inaccurate by comparing his prediction of a 113, K-12 student loss year with the actual total district loss of 6.8 full-time-equated students. However, PINS' comparison is faulty because it essentially measures apples against oranges: it compares a projected K-12 headcount with an actual enrollment which includes specially categorized students...."We can compare apples to oranges, if what we're talking about is fruit," said PINS' attorney, Bill Martin.

The article summarized the various concerns PINS members had expressed over the past month including: the accuracy of the superintendent's enrollment projections, the impact on the neighborhood, alternative uses of Bach, the projected use of portable classrooms, the middle school concept and the actual amount of savings the district would experience as a result of the closing.

The overriding concern, however, is whether school board members adequately and independently researched and studied the recommendation for the Bach closing.

Each board member was contacted by the Morning News and asked, "What independent study and or research did you do to determine for yourself that Bach was the best school to close?"

Without exception, board members said they had studied the information provided to them by the superintendent. They said they had also considered the input from the public meetings conducted at each of the elementary schools prior to the decision on which school to close.

None indicated they had done independent research, but several pointed to their experience on the board as being helpful in making the decision (Morning News, November 20, 1982).

Several community people expressed their views to me over the weekend.

I've been following the issue in the paper, but I didn't realize the board had talked about any educational uses for the building. I thought you were just going to board it up or sell it. This should make it more acceptable to Bach residents. Do they know?

I think the process has been handled well.

According to some people who live out on the river, they are not that concerned about Bach being closed and their children being transferred back to Wilkshire.

I'm surprised at how much the enrollment at the elementary level has dropped. (November 21, 1982).

Strategy Meetings Held

The president, the superintendent and I met on the following Monday to discuss the Bach situation. Both the superintendent and I expressed our feelings that we "certainly didn't want to close another school for a while!" The president said he "didn't want to either. Not because I'm afraid of community reaction, but because there won't be a need to" (November 22, 1982).

At my request, the superintendent reported on the feasibility of various options PINS had threatened to use if the board did not comply with its request to reconsider

closing Bach. Of the three options: recall, filing a lawsuit and petitioning for a referendum, recall seemed the most likely avenue for PINS to take. According to the attorney, none of the lawsuits which had been filed against school boards for closing a school had been successful. There has to be some procedural reason for the courts to step in. They will not rule on the closing, per se. Even if citizens petition the board to hold a referendum on the school closing issue, the board has the choice of whether or not to do so (November 22, 1982).

The state statute governing the recall of school board members requires that petitions be circulated and signed by registered electors "equal to not less than 20% of the votes cast for candidates for the office of Governor at the last preceding general election in the electoral district of the officer sought to be recalled". If enough signatures are obtained, an election on whether or not to recall specific board members is held. Any vacancies created by the recall election are filled at a subsequent election. The number of signatures required on the petition would be of sufficient quantity that the attorney did not "think it likely" that a recall campaign would be successful (Letter to Superintendent from School Attorney, November 30, 1982).

Discussion of the upcoming board meeting on December 6, ensued. I agreed to notify board members of our plan for handling the Bach closing issue at the December 6 meeting

(November 22, 1982).

At work the next day, a colleague told me he favored the concept of closing a school. "I don't know enough about the specific issues (to comment on the controversy) but I am confident the school board will handle the matter responsibly". (November 22, 1982).

The superintendent and I met to further discuss the Bach closing. He reported that the college provost was trying to get a grant for a community computer literacy program. If it came through, there was a possibility the college might want to offer the program at Bach School (November 22, 1982).

The superintendent asked me what I thought of "dealing with the Bach parents" at a special board meeting instead of at the scheduled December 6 board meeting. I expressed concern that we would not have enough time to prepare for an earlier meeting; also, since we had published December 6 as the date we would "deal with the issue" we had better not change it. Otherwise, "people might think we were being sneaky" (November 22, 1982).

He said he had investigated the possibility of our getting out of the contract, we had with the federal government to lease the old post office, early.

We could probably do so by writing to our senator and proving we have a tremendous need to do so. But, what would it gain us to move the central administrative offices to Bach. We can't keep the kids there too, and it would cost money to refurbish the building for administrative use.

Smith: Did you get a similar reaction in Silver Lake when you closed schools?

Richards: No. We were losing students so darn fast; we didn't get any reaction to the closing. We did about selling the school, though. We were taken to court but eventually they dropped the suit. We might get taken to court here, too. After all is said and done, we need to evaluate the process we have used (November 22, 1982).

Community Comments on Decision

Several letters to the editor appeared in the paper, one supporting the board's decision, the other criticizing it.

The school board is elected by the public to represent our views and ensure the welfare of the entire district. This does not mean that every individual or interest group is to be appeased....The recent decision by the school board to close Bach School was a difficult decision. However, the process involved was thorough, professional and fair....A reasonable amount of time was involved in research since there is also other school business that must be conducted....

Where were these parents (from Bach School) when they had the opportunity to voice opinions at the school meetings before the decision was made?....The Bach parent group is considering only their own children's school attendance rather than the benefit of the entire school district (Morning News, November 22, 1982).

A Bach parent wrote,

Close the portables first. The parents of Bach School students want to see Bach school preserved as an elementary school, and we believe this can be done if the portable classrooms are all shut down or disposed of. Please, save Bach School; close the portables first. We need to hear the public's voice before December 6 (Morning News, November 23, 1982).

A community member stopped me on the street to say that the Continuing Education Office was looking for off campus adult education sites. "Would Bach School be

available?" I promised that I would have the superintendent contact him (November 22, 1982).

The principal at the intermediate school told me that the reaction we had gotten to closing Bach would have happened no matter which school were closed. The superintendent "did a good job", he said (November 28, 1982).

Board Member Suggests Strategy

Following a student disciplinary hearing which was held in closed session, one of the board members expressed the hope that the superintendent would answer the concerns raised at the Bach School meeting (and which were subsequently published in the paper). "A lot of people have talked to me and when I have explained the situation, and answered their concerns, they have agreed with the board's decision" (November 28, 1982).

Some frustration was expressed by the superintendent and one of the board members at having "to continue to deal with the Bach issue".

We will see if any board member wants to change their mind. If not, they (PINS) can do whatever they want to about recalls and referendums.

If it comes to a referendum, the people from the other schools (other than Bach) would support closing Bach. November 28, 1982).

During November, the U.S. Census Bureau released a report analyzing changes in the number of family and non-family households in the county between 1970 and 1980. The

former had increased 9.7% while the latter had increased 70.3%. Commenting on the report, the college documents librarian observed,

One thing that is kind of interesting is related to the closing of Bach School. The census indicates a much higher number of prospective students; it is not as big as a baby boom, but it is substantial. While closing Bach probably would not create any problems, the closing of a second school might, and would require careful study of the census data (Central Life, November 29, 1982).

That same day another article predicting a decline in student enrollment at the college appeared in the paper.

"The pool of students we used to draw our enrollment from has dropped by one - third, and every school in Michigan is competing for that pool," according to the assistant vice-provost for Planning, Instruction and Research. "When we start falling below 16,000 students, then faculty decline is inevitable," he commented. "It may be necessary to cut full-time faculty when few or no temporary faculty can be cut from a particular department" (Central Life, November 29, 1982).

Board President Challenges PINS

PINS members announced their plans to meet at Bach Elementary School that evening. According to the newspaper article, the group expected to discuss research compiled by their members. PINS' request to cancel or postpone closing Bach was slated for discussion by the Board of Education at its December 6 meeting (Morning News, November 30, 1982).

Approximately 25 PINS members met to discuss their opposition to the Bach closing. The board president, at his insistence, was also present. Many questions concerning the closing were directed to the president. A reoccurring question was: "what can citizens do to convince the board

to delay or cancel the Bach closing?" "I don't know what to tell you," the president replied. Then he went on to say, "You need to convince the board members that others agree with you because the rest of the community says the closing is OK. The board has to believe that the (data collection) method is credible."

PINS Decides to Distribute Questionnaire

Eventually, the group decided to distribute a questionnaire, door to door, throughout the entire district. The purpose of the survey would be to determine how many people opposed the closing of Bach School. The results would be presented to the board at its next meeting on December 6, according to the spokesman for PINS. The spokesman also maintained that the number of people in the group had grown to 100 members (Central Life, December 1, 1982).

The attorney for PINS said that the group would decide which of the other methods for preventing the closing of Bach would be used if the board did not agree to PINS' request. In response to a question on whether PINS was preparing for a court injunction, the attorney said, "I have not researched what is necessary for a court injunction" (Central Life, December 1, 1982).

Board Plans Strategy

On December 1st and 2nd, I talked on the phone with each board member to discuss the following strategy for the December 6 meeting.

1. Concerns raised at the Bach meeting on November 16 would be answered by the superintendent.

2. The board would discuss PINS' request.

3. There would be an opportunity for the audience to comment.

4. The board would make a decision on PINS' request.

Each of them was in favor of that approach. Most of them felt that the community supported the board's decision to close Bach.

They understand we need the money and they don't see where PINS is coming from.

A lot of people who aren't from Bach think it's a shame we're getting all this hassle.

More and more people are in favor of closing a school rather than paying more millage (taxes).

People understood the process we used. They're sorry we had to put up with all this scuttlebutt.

The rest of the community (other than members of PINS) says the closing is OK.

Several had received a number of phone calls from PINS members.

I've been bombarded with calls about recalling the board.

I had to lay it on the line with PINS, they expected me to be more sympathetic.

Most expressed frustration with PINS and the need for the board to "stand fast".

They should have had the decency to talk to the superintendent or board members. Instead they went to the Downtown Business Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the newspapers.

Their numbers are dwindling down to die-hards. We need to stand our ground.

We can't keep re-opening the discussion. They can recall us if they want to.

These people (PINS) that are hanging on have to keep going to save face.

If we don't do it (close a school) this year, we'll have to go through all this again next year. (Comments made by board members, December 1 and 2, 1982).

The superintendent expressed frustration that he was spending so much time "on this crap - which is what it is getting to be. There are so many other things I need to do. I haven't been able to get out into the district at all this year and that's not good" (December 1, 1982).

PINS Collects Signatures on Petitions

On Friday, December 3, an article appeared in the student paper describing PINS' petition drive. A PINS' spokesman said the group had collected 900 signatures as of the previous morning. "The petitions show there are a tremendous amount of people out there (who oppose the closing)," he said. The group's attorney commented,

We will circulate the petitions getting a general assessment of the people and present them to the board knowing we will lose. But, it will put us in a political confrontation position and convince the board that it is wise to do an impact study.

The vice president of the board was quoted as saying that the board would listen to the community but must still consider the original reasons for closing the school, declining enrollment and inadequate revenues (Central Life,

December 3, 1982).

Superintendent Unaware of Petition Drive

After reading the article, I immediately called the superintendent who had not seen the student paper. He said, "I don't know what to think. How come no one has called us? What they said to people is important - so is what the petition actually says."

I agreed to call Ann Johnson who had offered to "help me in any way she could" in gratitude for the board's action on another matter. Mrs. Johnson said she hadn't been approached and she was surprised because she had been with some parents, "who were involved". She had "mixed feelings" about closing Bach; "would we really save \$100,000 if it were closed?" A short time later, she called back to say that the petition asked the board, "to delay the closing of any elementary school for one year while they conduct an impact study. The undersigned disagree with the policy of closing a school for only a 1 % saving in the budget." Again, she expressed surprise that neither she nor other members of SNAG (South Neighborhood Action Group) had been asked to sign a petition since they (SNAG) had been supportive of PINS at public meetings as well as privately (December 3, 1982).

Opposition Continues Criticism of Board

A letter to the editor from several unhappy Bach parents listed a number of unanswered questions. According

to them, the board had still not given the community satisfactory answers regarding: why the building had to be closed, why the district could not sell the portables instead of closing a building and how the board members had arrived at their decision (Morning News, December 4, 1982).

These reoccurring letters to the editor along with comments made at public meetings and press releases appeared to me to be attempts to persuade people in the community that the board had made the wrong decision and that the community should pressure school board members to change that decision. As one letter writer said,

In our opinion, no answers have been given. Just a few of the questions that our entire community should think about are: ...Do the people of Eureka realize that the agenda calls for the tentative closing of Tappan plus the input of a middle school in a couple of years?...We feel the decision to close any elementary school has been a hasty one and urge the school board to cancel or delay the decision for a year in order for an in-depth study to be made (Morning News, December 4, 1982).

PINS Canvasses Neighborhoods

The weekend before the December 6 school board meeting, members of PINS canvassed the neighborhoods, asking people to sign their petitions. The following statement appeared at the top of the petition.

Hello, I am with the Partners In Neighborhood Schools organization. We are circulating a petition to persuade the school board to keep Bach School open for one more year while a complete community impact study of the closing of Bach School is done. The impact of the closing of a school, we feel, would affect the entire community.

I agree that the closing of Bach School and the possible closing of other neighborhood schools for a

savings of less than 1% is not a policy I support. I support keeping neighborhood schools open and only after the full impact to the entire community is studied should a school be closed. Therefore, I encourage the Eureka School Board of Education to delay for at least one year the closing of Bach School and then conduct a complete community impact study. (Petition Distributed by PINS, December, 1982).

After someone came to my door asking for my signature, not realizing I lived there, I wondered if perhaps we had underestimated the ability of PINS to mobilize community opinion against the board on this issue (Personal Note, December 4, 1982).

Support for Board Expressed

Over the weekend, I received comments from several community members.

I support the board's decision to close Bach. People deny that enrollment is declining. I have the same problem convincing the Board of Trustees at the college that student enrollment is declining and will continue to do so. I may come to the December 6 board meeting to support the superintendent's projections of declining enrollment. I realize you are dealing with a special interest group and that the rest of the community, who support the decision, are not coming to your meetings (Comments by a college administrator, December 4, 1982).

The Board of Education has left no stone unturned in the process of closing a school. You should listen to PINS and the petitioners but the board is trusted by the community to make a decision that's best for the whole community. We're very supportive of the board; don't change your decision (Comments by a college administrator, December 5, 1982).

There is something to be said for delay. Enrollment is going back up again. It's good that you're not getting rid of Bach in case you need it. But, if you ever decide to get rid of a school, Bach is the one to get rid of (Comments by a local architect, December 5, 1982).

Board Member Urges Second Public Hearing

Sunday evening I received a phone call from board member Edward Kirby. A person from PINS had been at his door Thursday night to get his signature on their petition. If PINS really did have 900 signatures (as they had told the C M Life reporter), then he, Kirby "had a problem." He thought we should hold another public hearing so that people would come and we could give them the facts. "We need to bring this to an end, but if there are 900 signatures and we reject the petitions, they won't support the school system."

He had contacted two other board members and the superintendent about his idea. The board members were split on the issue, one favoring a second hearing and the other adamantly opposed to it. He thought the superintendent was in favor of the idea.

I haven't changed my mind about closing Bach but I think another public hearing is necessary politically. Otherwise, it looks like we're not listening. The issue at this point is can we just throw it back in their face, or do we make one more effort. Those 900 signatures are coming from around town, not just from Bach. We were criticized four or five years ago for not listening to the public and now we're doing the same thing again. The public will perceive our rejection of the petitions as not listening - that puts us in a poor position to sell anything.

He went on to explain that if I made a motion not to reconsider the Bach closing at the December 6 board meeting, he would have to vote against it because he wanted the board to have another hearing before making a final decision on Bach. A "no" vote on a motion not to reconsider the decision

would be misconstrued by the public as an indication that he was against closing Bach when in fact that was not true. Therefore, he hoped the board would agree to another hearing. I agreed to call him back after consulting with the board president and the superintendent (December 5, 1982).

Strategy Developed by Board

The president, superintendent and I discussed several options, including appointing a citizens task force, ignoring the petitions and holding a public hearing. We agreed that appointing a citizens task force was the most desirable option but in order to give maximum credibility to the task force we decided on the following strategy:

1. If there were only 300-400 signatures, we would proceed as we had planned previously. That is, I would make a motion not to reconsider the Bach closing decision.

2. If there were a significant number of names on the petitions (more than 300-400), I would move that the board Personnel Committee review the signatures on the petitions and recommend a course of action to the board at a special meeting on Wednesday, December 8. The committee could be ready to recommend names for the citizens task force at the December meeting.

I agreed to call Kirby, who had called me earlier, and tell him of our plan. I did so and he was pleased with the resolution of his problem (December 5, 1982).

Petitions to be Presented at Board Meeting

An article about the upcoming board meeting appeared in the paper the next morning. In the article it was noted that the board was expected to discuss the Bach closing, and that representatives from the "100-member Partners In Neighborhood Schools group" would be there to present petitions in opposition to the school closing.

PINS members claim the closing will overcrowd the remaining six elementaries, lower property values in the Bach neighborhood, and scare new business from moving to Eureka....The board decided October 18 to close Bach to offset district declining enrollments and to save about \$100,000. PINS members have said if the board doesn't reverse its October 18 decision to close the school, the organization will pursue other options to stop the closing. Other options could include recalling all seven board members, seeking a court injunction, or petitioning for a vote on a closing, according to PINS members (Morning News, December 6, 1982).

December 6 Board Meeting

The December 6 board meeting was well attended; approximately seventy community members were present.

Superintendent addresses concerns raised by PINS. As planned, the superintendent addressed the concerns PINS members had raised at various meetings, in their publicity and in the newspaper. He spoke about the following issues:

1. School enrollment figures, past and future.
2. The effect of closing a school on neighborhood property values; a letter from the superintendent of Livonia Public Schools stated there was no evidence to support this concern if the building were not left vacant.

3. The sale of relocatables (portables).

4. The dollar savings to the district if Bach were closed.

5. The projected use of Bach if it were closed.

6. The board's intentions regarding a middle school.

7. The educational benefits of closing a school.

The business manager reminded the board that during the past year, the district had "expended \$500,000 more than it took in in revenue" and that there was "no indication that the state economy would be any better in the near future".

Allison presents petitions. PINS was invited to make a presentation by the board president. Mr. Allison their spokesman, presented the petitions bearing, according to him, 1100 signatures which PINS had collected "from all over town - not just Bach School people....We are trying to show the board that the community is concerned."

Martin recommends selling Central Office. Mr. Martin, PINS' attorney, presented a recommendation to the board that it sell Central Office and move the superintendent and other central office administrators to Bach. Such an action would, according to Martin,

1. Keep children in sound buildings, not portables.
2. Avoid overcrowding at Tappan.
3. Instantly infuse cash into the school system.
4. Keep the neighborhood school.
5. Put a significant building on the tax rolls.
6. Avoid the community split that might well be the result the result of abandoning the neighborhood school when not absolutely necessary.
7. Buy time to see if economic development in

Eureka will cause growth and to improve our enrollment forecasting.

8. Allow time for a professional impact study to weigh other community values, (such as, park land, property values, city grant planning, etc.) so as to avoid the community saving a few dollars in the educational budget only to lose more dollars in a non-educational budget.

He closed by stating,

The PINS organization endorses a plan along these lines and feels it will have a positive effect in solving genuine problems. If the board does not see how this error in the data limited their options, that is a separate problem (PINS Recommendation to Eureka School Board, December 16, 1982).

The "error in data" Martin was referring to was the misunderstanding over when Central Office (the former post office) would become the property of the school district. The superintendent had originally given January 15, 1986 as the appropriate date when he made his original "Recommendation on Future Building Needs" to the board on July 15, 1982. Later it was determined by the superintendent that the date had been calculated incorrectly and that the date the building would be available for sale by the district was two years earlier, January 30, 1984. Even though none of the board members nor the superintendent saw moving central office administrators to Bach School and selling the current central office building as a viable option, Martin continued to press the point at every opportunity. Members of PINS believed that those children who were currently attending Bach School could continue at that school under their plan. When board members asked how

that would be possible if central office administrators were moved there, they received no response (December 6, 1982).

Petitions discussed. Discussion among board members and members of the audience followed the presentation by PINS.

Straub: How valid are the signatures? I don't want to belittle your efforts but how did you collect them?

Member of Audience: That makes me furious.

Allison: The board president said he hadn't run into many people who were concerned so we decided to get names on petitions. People are real concerned. We spent about 15 minutes per person (talking about their concerns).

Member of Audience: I have been present at every one of those board meetings. Do the signatures that people worked so hard to get mean anything to the board members?

Straub: I move that the board Personnel Committee be designated to review the petitions and other related materials presented to the board at this meeting and that the board hold a special meeting on December 8, 1982 at 5:00 pm to receive a recommendation from the Personnel Committee regarding Bach School.

The motion was carried (Board of Education Minutes, December 6, 1982).

Community Comments Received

The next day, several community members approached me about the Bach School situation on different occasions.

How can Bach parents be against closing a school. Where have they been that they don't understand the situation?

Was it the paper's fault? They said Bach parents didn't care and then we got a reaction from Bach.

Others saw the situation differently.

I believe Martin's figures.

The goof regarding the date on which central office could be sold hurts the board's credibility - especially since in the recent past, the board didn't have any credibility.

Even if the board's figures are right (and they better be or the board will lose all credibility), the school still shouldn't be closed. Instead go for one-half mill (in additional taxes) to keep it open. I'm sure voters would support it.

I resent the fact that Grove Corners, who doesn't pass millages, got to keep their school (because of the negative effect that closing it would have on their neighborhood) while Bach didn't (December 7, 1982).

Personnel Committee Meeting

The Personnel Committee (consisting of the board president, board member Kemper, the superintendent and I) met over breakfast the morning of the seventh. We reviewed the stacks of petitions and decided there really was no way we could judge the validity of the signatures. We agreed to recommend to the board that a Citizens Task Force be appointed to:

1. Review the decision to close Bach School.
2. Review the appropriate materials including the superintendent's report, "Recommendations on Future Building Needs" , PINS' materials and any other relevant information.
3. Report their conclusions to the board on December 20, 1982.

A list of names, representative of the various groups in the community, was agreed upon and each member of the committee was to contact some of those people in the next 24 hours to see if they would serve, providing the board approved the

committee's recommendation on the eighth. Allison, the spokesman for PINS, was added to the list. The other two board members favored including him. The superintendent was not sure it was a good idea. I saw it as a form of co-optation and thought we should do so (December 7, 1982).

It was apparent from the conversation at the breakfast meeting that everyone was "getting fed up with" PINS and especially Martin, their attorney. The other two members of the Personnel Committee agreed to the Task Force because the superintendent and I wanted it, but they were not enthused. The meeting concluded with an exchange between the board president and the superintendent.

President: Well, these citizen task forces are a facade but the community doesn't realize this and therefore they can be a valuable way of getting community support and/or can provide a scapegoat.

Superintendent: If we have to get a task force everytime we make a decision, I'm getting out of this business. I'm concerned that special interest groups will start running the school district. Next time someone is unhappy will we have to appoint a task force? I'm afraid people (governing groups) will try to avoid controversy in the future. I'm getting some phone calls from people who are going to get out their own petitions if we change our mind on closing Bach (December 7, 1982).

After the meeting, I realized that the real question was, how do we "manage" PINS so that the rest of the community does not join them? It appeared to me, based on the petitions and the number who signed them, that many people in the community were not well informed on this issue. Martin had made the school district look inept on the central office date issue. As one person had mentioned to me

earlier, this incident had affected the credibility of our whole argument (Personal Note, December 7, 1982).

Board Divided on Citizens Task Force Proposal

I talked with three other board members about the Personnel Committee's task force proposal before the Wednesday board meeting. They were divided on the issue.

Ulrich was adamantly opposed to the task force idea, believing that we were elected to do a job and we could not turn it over to some one else. She did not want to ignore the petitions but felt that PINS members were "making us dance to their tune."

I felt really angry last night at the board meeting. It's an insult to the board. I resent the anger and animosity I saw on the faces of some of those parents; it was worse than when we were going through the strike. There was shouting from the floor and there was a lot of resentment expressed after the meeting. We're giving into them (PINS). They are playing games with us and making up rules as they go along. We are bending over backwards to make the community feel we are listening. Let's just call off tomorrow's special board meeting. Also, I don't like having Allison on the task force. I 'm afraid he will sway the other members.

Allen was not opposed to the task force, "but", he said,

The more we procrastinate the more they (PINS) will carry it on. It will die down quickly if we stick to our guns. Appointing a task force will just prolong it. No matter how good a committee we get, PINS won't listen. They will think it's trumped up. We are at a point in time when we should go out and petition the people ourselves. I'm willing to try. I'll bet I could get 300 signatures from the north end (the neighborhood where Bach School was located). PINS has us on the defensive. Let's show them we have more support than they do. Then they wouldn't even think of trying a recall. We've been kicked. We need to fight fire with fire. We could get some people to do it for us. They realize if we don't close a building, we will either have to cut programs or go for more millage.

Straub was in favor of the task force.

If for some reason an outside group criticizes us, that's ok; we've made mistakes before. The task force would let some of the pressure off the situation and probably wouldn't change anything, unless they came back with the conclusion we were wrong. I'm opposed to the board getting their own petition, but I will support the task force idea. We need board solidarity on this issue because its important to stay together.

Allison Invited to Join Task Force

It was my responsibility to talk with Allison about serving on the Citizens Task Force, if one were appointed by the board on Wednesday. I met with him in his office at his store. He was very cordial and seemed genuinely pleased that I had made an effort to discuss the situation with him. He began the conversation by assuring me that he was "dead set against recalling board members" but some people in his group wanted it and he "might not be able to prevent their going for it". I outlined the Personnel Committee's proposal. He said he "supported the Citizen Task Force idea 100%" and would be glad to serve on it. In fact, he had more information he wanted to present to the task force. He had contacted the Eureka Education Association (EEA) executive board and had asked for time on their January 7 agenda to explain PINS' position. He understood that the superintendent had made a presentation to them, but nobody had asked the union for their opinion, according to Allison. As I was leaving, he expressed appreciation for my coming and said, "I don't always agree with what appears in the paper over my name. That's the price of being a leader, I

guess."

Community Comments Received

Just before I left for the 5 pm board meeting on Wednesday, I received a phone call from the wife of a teacher. She wanted me to know she supported the board's decision. "The superintendent is doing what we pay him to do. We need to close Bach. We are spread too thin. All the programs will suffer if we don't (close the building)" (December 12, 1982).

There had been three letters to the editor in the paper that morning: two supporting PINS and one supporting the board. The former were from members of PINS.

....A board member mentioned (at Monday night's board meeting) that programs would need to be cut if the school did not save \$100,000 they will supposedly save with the closing of Bach. Well, after going door to door to door talking to the people with my petition in hand, I feel sure the school board will indeed have to cut programs in the future because these people just may not support the next millage vote.... One of the greatest rights and privileges of being Americans is that our voices count....Please listen (Morning News, December 8, 1982).

The spokesman for PINS wrote about that group's recommendations and criticized the superintendent's plan as being inappropriate for Eureka.

The superintendent's plan limits its source of input to those areas in lower Michigan that are in drastic population decline as it related to the auto industry. Eureka is a far cry from such desparation.

He criticized the board for not listening to PINS.

Will the Wednesday, December 8 board meeting be an honest attempt to help answer our questions or will we once again witness an unwillingness to study our

information? (Morning News, December 8, 1982).

A member of the community urged the board to close Bach.

....The primary purpose of the public school system is to meet the needs of our youth. The school board was elected to pursue that goal diligently. It transcends all other goals....The enrollment is down in the elementary grades, the surplus has been used up, and the cutback from the state is forthcoming, the basic problem is threatened, and this taxpayer asks that you do what your research tells you to do (Morning News, December 8, 1982).

Board Approves Citizen Task Force Proposal: 4 to 3

Articles about the upcoming meeting appeared in both the local paper and the student paper the morning of the meeting. About thirty people were in the audience when the board heard the recommendations from its Personnel Committee.

Speaking in favor of the proposal, Smith, a member of the Personnel Committee said that appointing a task force would be helpful because such a group could review all the available information and

tell the community what the facts are. The judgemental role, of deciding what to do based on those facts, was one that the board could not delegate to the task force. Appointing a task force would not absolve the board of its responsibility to make a decision on the issue.

Ulrich spoke against the committee's proposal.

....I would prefer not to close any schoolI commend PINS for the work they have done. I regret that it came after the announcement to close Bach; however, the findings do not alter the facts. We cannot continue to operate a sound educational system under the financial strain and enrollment decline we are in - and will continue to be in for several years. Let's put this to bed tonight and get on with our pressing educational needs....Each of us are dealing with our

own particular kind of hurting in the school closing. Let us not become a vehicle of sides. Let us accept the fact that we have acted in the best interest of our children and their education. Let us do our best to support each other in this matter....There are rough decisions to be made and we can't please everyone - often with an overlay of thick emotion. Some questions have relatively easy answers but some critical issues can't be handled in a simplistic way. It's multiple choice with no right answer and there is community pressure. We can't be indecisive - we need to face our responsibilities in any situation we face. We have to stand up and be counted. I feel this impressive task force will reach the same conclusions that we have, however, don't set up a second Board of Education. I urge the defeat of this motion (Written statement read by Ulrich at Board Meeting, December 8, 1982).

Allen supported Ulrich's statement saying he had received six phone calls that day supporting the board's decision. Straub said he also supported Ulrich's statement but felt that,

in the interests of fairness, the board should appoint the committee. I think the task force will reach the same conclusion as the board, but the task force may be the means to further authenticate the method the board used. Perhaps we haven't done a good job in explaining our point of view to the community.

Ferguson commended Ulrich for her statements and agreed with them. Speaking from the audience, Allison indicated that he had talked with Smith earlier that day and, he felt the task force would be a good idea. There was a roll call vote on the proposal to establish a citizens task force. The results were:

Ayes: Kemper, Kirby, Smith and Straub.

Nayes: Allen, Ferguson and Ulrich.

Following the passage of the motion, the board considered the names being recommended for appointment to

the task force. Straub questioned whether the task force could be neutral if a member from PINS was on it. After some discussion, he withdrew his objection and the motion to appoint the recommended members passed (Morning News, December 9, 1982; Board of Education Minutes, December 8, 1982).

During the public hearing section of the meeting, a self-described "long time resident and taxpayer" urged the board not to abandon its prior decision to close Bach School.

I, for one, do not wish the board to make the "tough" decisions in an emotional setting or to be influenced by the "wet finger in the air technique" in determining which way the wind is blowing, and certainly I don't wish for the board to be intimidated in any way. The process the board has followed is sound. The board should stay with it and the citizens will applaud its efforts. The issue seems relatively simple. We have more elementary schools than are needed to accomodate the present and future students. The district is desparately short of dollars and savings would result by closing one or more schools. Citizens expect the board to economize wherever possible. Unless some compelling objective evidence has surfaced since October (if there is, I have not heard of it), the decision should stand (Written Statement read by Bob Kemper, December 8, 1982).

In response to a question from a newspaper reporter after the meeting, the superintendent supported the board's appointment of a citizen's task force. "I feel confident a task force will look at the information and decision and concur with us." When asked whether he thought a task force should have been appointed when the board started to consider a closing this summer, he said, "No. I think the

procedure we followed was appropriate. Other districts with task forces have had situations, especially with first closings. The same kinds of issues arise (in other districts with task forces)" (Morning News, December 9, 1982).

After the meeting, I thanked Kemper for supporting the appointment of a task force even though she had some reservations about the idea. She replied that she had not known what to do but finally "went with it" because she had "supported the board's receiving public input" into their decisions in the past. "I just didn't know there would be so much when I said that," she remarked ruefully (December 9, 1982).

Community Comments Received

The next evening an elementary teacher and parent told me she supported the board's decision to close Bach because she did not want elementary physical education, music and art cut any further. "I thought of calling you but I didn't know if board members liked to hear from those who agreed with them." I assured her they did (December 9, 1982).

I talked with the superintendent about Allison's request to address the EEA executive board on the school closing issue. He said that he had asked the EEA what their position was when he had explained his recommendation earlier in the year. They had replied that they had no position on the issue (December 9, 1982).

The board president called to discuss the Bach

situation. He thought PINS members had distributed petitions because of suggestions he had made at their organizational meeting. (At least three board members had told me they were unhappy that the president had attended PINS' organizational meeting. They opposed his going because they did not want him to speak for the rest of the board and because they thought "his going helped to keep people stirred up" (December 9, 1982).

A community member who was active in SNAG told me she favored appointing a citizen's task force. "You can't just ignore 1100 signatures." (December 10, 1982).

In thinking about the various responses the board had heard from the community, it was apparent that there were at least three different opinions held by members of the community.

1. Some Bach parents, especially those who lived near the school, maintained that it was worth keeping Bach open even if it meant giving up art, music and physical education at the elementary school level because they did not see those programs as being necessary anyway.

2. Some Bach parents, especially those who lived in affluent neighborhoods on the river, thought the voters would be willing to pay the one-half mill increase in taxes it would require to keep Bach operating.

3. Some non-Bach parents wanted Bach School closed so that programs would not have to be cut. They were not

willing to pay extra taxes just to keep Bach open.

Several days later a letter thanking the community for its support of PINS appeared in the local paper.

I wish to thank all of the people that took the time to talk to our members about the school closing. A great many people support the PINS organization's ideas and signed our petitions....Our members also deserve a special thanks as they have spent many long hours walking door to door to educate the public and to confirm that PINS does indeed represent the people of the whole area. The organization will continue its activity because the people have shown that PINS has their support (Morning News, September 10, 1982).

During the week preceding the December 20 board meeting (when the Citizens Task Force was slated to make its report), a number of people spoke to me about the Bach issue. A college administrator expressed his support for the board's decision saying that 1100 signatures out of a total population of over 20,000 people was not very many.

Someone came to my door and I told the petitioner that the board had already studied the topic to death. The board has had to cut too many enrichment programs already and closing a school will enable it to stop doing that. I understand enrollment decline. Some of the people on the college board of trustees have their heads in the sand and don't believe enrollment at the college will decline either (December 12, 1982).
An elementary school teacher told me,

I think the board is handling the whole process of closing Bach School very well (December 12, 1982).

A Bach parent who had opposed the board's decision said,

I think the task force will make Allison and others feel better. I don't doubt that the decision on the 20th will still be the same. The board will decide for sure on the 20th, won't it? It's important for the kids to know what is going to happen. You know that I'm opposed to Bach being closed; but, I don't want the community to be split over it (December 12, 1982).

Another Bach parent, who supported the board's stand called to say,

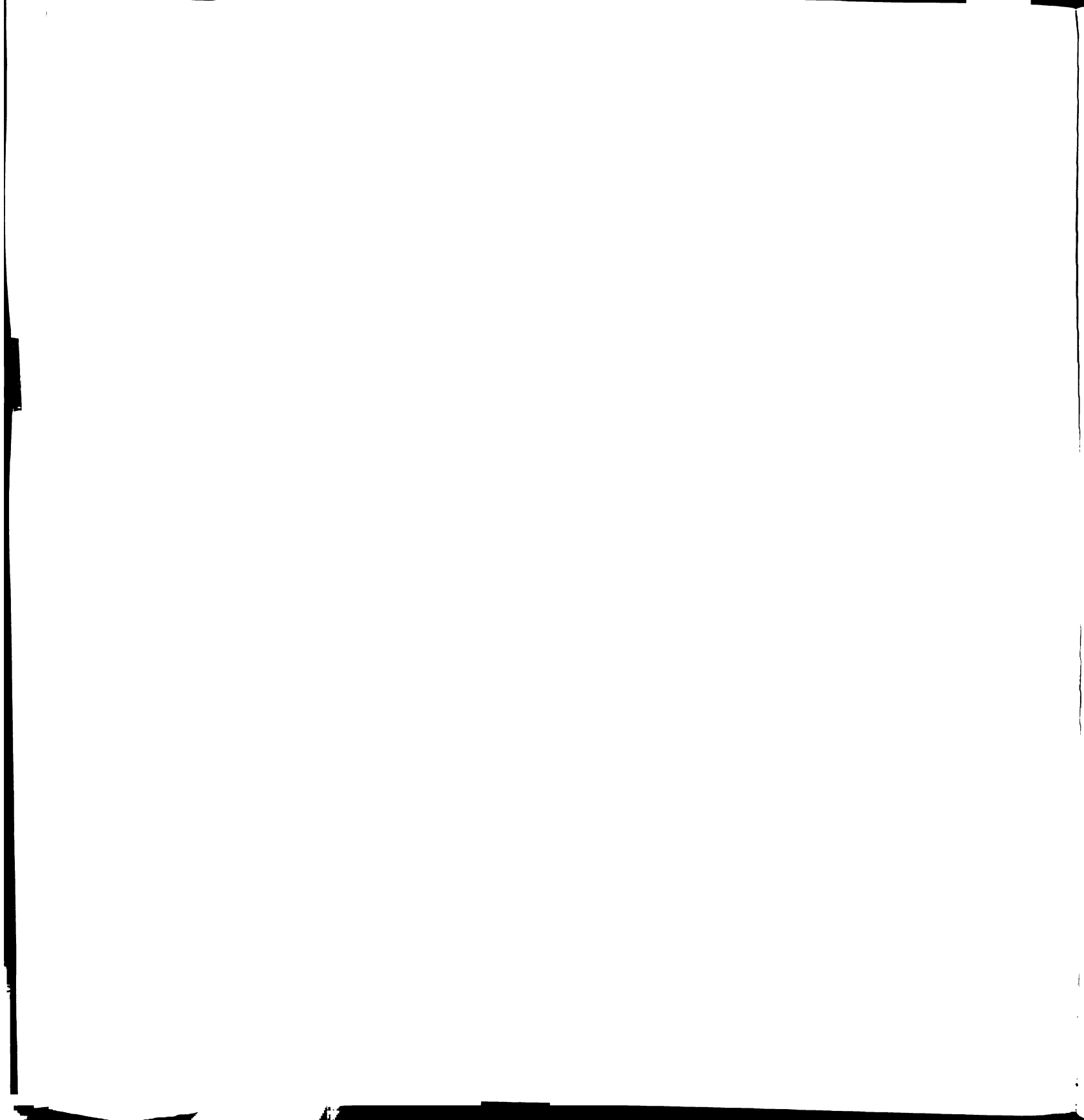
Some of us (Bach parents) support the board. As long as the principal at Bach is utilized as a principal somewhere else in the system, there is no problem. He has a good attitude towards involving parents in the school and is just a "super" person (December 13, 1982).

Bach Parents Cordial at Open House

I attended a PTA Open House at Bach School on December 14. I went to the Open House because I wanted to show the parents and teachers that the board had no ill feelings towards them and that we did not want to polarize the situation into two sides. I was a little concerned about the reception I might get but was pleasantly surprised at the friendly reception I received. No one said anything to me about closing Bach. Even one of the mothers who had been quite emotional in opposing the closing confined her remarks to, "We really love our Bach School, the teachers, and our principal." She told me that she had attended Bach as a child, her grandmother had gone to the original Bach school on that same site, and she had moved back to the Bach neighborhood so that her children could go to Bach. Quite a few parents said hello to me and knew my name even though I did not know who they were (Personal Note, December 14, 1982).

Non-Bach Parents Unconcerned

At a parents' coffee with the high school principal the next morning, no one mentioned the Bach closing. They did



not even realize it was on the next week's board agenda until I mentioned it. They were more concerned about high school curriculum issues and the evaluation of teachers (December 15, 1982).

A member of CARE commented to me, "Appointing a task force was a stroke of genius. Someone needed to look at the situation from a different perspective. That is why my husband and I signed the petition (December 15, 1982).

The wife of a former school board member in response to an inquiry from me said, "I've not heard any discussion of the Bach issue, at all" (December 17, 1982).

Community Support for Board Decision

A former school board member called the superintendent to see if he should take petitions in support of the school board decision around the community. Allen had talked to him about it. The superintendent and I agreed that would not be appropriate and that to our knowledge only one board member favored such an action (December 17, 1982).

Allen told me that he thought the task force was a good idea but so many people had told him they were against delaying the decision that he felt he had to represent their point of view and vote against it (December 18, 1982).

The former superintendent told me that the people he talked to were supporting the board on Bach. A lawyer out on the river signed a petition even though he supported the board because his neighbor asked him to. Those petitions

don't mean a damn thing" (December 18, 1982).

The school's attorney commented that he was hearing very little about Bach around town.

If anything, people think the board should have stuck with their decision and not gone with a task force. They say that we should have used a task force up front, not after the fact, if we were going to use one (December 18, 1982).

A parent called to say that he had been asked to write a letter in support of the board, by the former superintendent, to improve the board's morale. "I agree with the board's decision for financial reasons but I'm not sure I want to write a letter in response to an organized effort to show support for the board." I assured him that the board was not demoralized, that negative reactions from the community "go with the territory" and closing a school was just one of those difficult decisions that had to be made (December 20, 1982).

Citizens Task Force Reports

The Citizens' Task Force Report was not ready in time to be included in the board packet which was usually distributed to board members on the Thursday before the Monday board meeting. Therefore, board members had to pick up the report from Central Office the afternoon of the meeting. On my way into the building I met Straub. He expressed relief that the Task Force had supported the board's decision.

I would have voted to go ahead with the decision even if they (the task force) had opposed it, but it would

have been hard to ignore their report if it had been negative. I thought it might be. I heard that Allison was opposed to the Task Forces' conclusions but that he understood them. I think his wife is especially adamant in being opposed to the board's decision (December 20, 1982).

The superintendent and I discussed the report. The only possible problem was their recommendation that all classes be moved out of the relocatables and into the main buildings if a school were closed. The superintendent observed,

No parents ever complained about their kids being in the relocatables until PINS made an issue of it. Perhaps we should refer the issue to the Building and Grounds Committee for them to review and report back to the board in January.

Later, the president and I discussed possible strategies for dealing with the Task Force report. He preferred that the relocatable issue not be referred to the Building and Grounds Committee since that would "keep the issue alive". Instead, he suggested that we direct the administration to limit the use of relocatables as much as possible.

Approximately thirty people attended the board meeting that night. Letters of support for the board were read from four well known citizens.

The Chairman of the Task Force presented the committee's report as follows:

1. One elementary school building should no longer be used for an elementary school after the 1982-83 school year "because of the 500-plus decline in K-6 enrollment since 1977-78 and because no increase is foreseen in the next four

years."

2. The "building must be kept in such condition that if K-6 enrollment increases at some future time, the building should again be used as an elementary school building."

3. The building should not be closed but should be used for other educational purposes that "maintain or enhance the quality of the neighborhood".

4. The relocatables that are not being used should be sold.

5. If an elementary school building is closed, all classes should be moved out of the relocatables and into the main buildings.

6. The administration building (Central Office) should be maintained and utilized until adequate centralized space is available at either the intermediate or high school buildings.

7. The elementary school building to be closed as an elementary building is Bach Elementary.

The board voted to accept the report and directed the administration to "limit the use of relocatables for classrooms to the extent it is possible".

Board Reaffirms Closing Decision

A motion was made that the Board of Education not reconsider their October 18 decision to close Bach Elementary School at the end of the 1982-83 school year. Several people in the audience expressed thier opposition to

the closing of Bach and to the use of relocatables. After hearing several comments that the motion was not "proper" according to Robert's Rules of Order, the motion was withdrawn. A motion to "reaffirm the board action of October 18, 1982 to close Bach Elementary School passed unanimously (Board of Education Minutes, December 20, 1982).

Allison: Still Options to Pursue

Allison said he did not agree with all of the recommendations but would work towards a smooth implementation. Later, however, he told the newspaper reporter that "lots of people are still upset and there are still options to pursue" (Morning News, December 21, 1982).

After the board meeting, one of the Bach parents who had been vocal in her opposition shook hands with each of the board members. She said she realized it was not an easy decision for the board to make. She could tell we had agonized over it by the expressions on our faces. Kirby, who had maintained we could close a school two years in a row, if necessary, told her, "I had no idea that closing a school was going to be this big a deal (December 20, 1982).

Summary

The initial reactions to the board's decision to close Bach School were disappointment, surprise, understanding, sadness, anger and resignation. Nine days after the decision was made, however, organized opposition began to develop. Eventually, a group calling themselves Partners In

Neighborhood Schools (PINS) formed, chose officers, charged dues and hired a lawyer. Members of the group wrote letters to the editor, spoke at board meetings, organized meetings of their own and ultimately collected over 1100 signatures on petitions asking the board to reconsider its decision to close Bach School. Upon being presented with the petitions, the board postponed its plan to vote against reconsideration of the issue. Instead, a Citizens Task Force was appointed to review the relevant information and the board's decision. The task force did so and upheld the board's decision. The board immediately reaffirmed its decision to close Bach at the end of the 1982-83 school year. The PINS spokesman told a newspaper reporter that people were still upset and there were still options to pursue.

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CHAPTER SIX

CONSTITUENT GROUP CHALLENGES

THE DOMINANT COALITION

Conflict Between Groups

Theoretical Perspective

Coleman: Community Conflict

Coleman's (1957) discussion of community conflict provides a useful perspective in analyzing the controversy which resulted from the closing of Bach School. As he and Blau (1982) noted, community conflict is likely to be greater in a small community where people are more involved in the community and where community life is important to many individuals. The conflict over the school closing occurred because many people in Eureka cared about the schools and the impact they had on their children's education.

Criteria for dispute. There are three criteria which must be met if an event or incident is to lead to a dispute (Cataldo and Holm, 1983; Coleman, 1957).

1. The event must touch an important aspect of community members' lives, such as the education of their children or taxes.

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2. The event must affect the lives of different community members differently.

3. The event must be one on which community members think they can take action.

Characteristics of administrative revolts. One group of conflicts consists of revolts against an administration (Cataldo and Holm, 1983). They have the following characteristics:

1. The administration in power becomes the defendant in the controversy.

2. An active minority group opposes the administration because the members of the group want power or because they are ideologically committed to a cause.

3. A large inactive group exists who are acquiescent towards the administration but who are not actively supporting it.

4. There is a minority group who actively support the administration.

5. The inactive majority is made ready for action by changes in the general climate of opinion or in the local climate of opinion brought on by specific acts of the administration which are viewed as blunders by the majority.

6. The ideologically - committed, active oppositionist group is able to use the new hostile atmosphere to gain its own ends (Coleman, 1957).

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Dynamics of Controversy. Once a controversy has begun it tends to resemble other controversies, regardless of the source or type of precipitating incident. If there are no situational constraints, the following unrestrained dynamic tendencies occur.

1. Changes in issues. New and different issues, unrelated to the original ones, are added. The purpose of adding issues is to solidify the opinion of current participants and to attract new ones. A conflict which started as a disagreement over issues, becomes personalized and people may dislike each other even after the issue is settled (Aubert, 1963; Pondy, 1967).

2. Changes in the social organization of the community. Social relations become polarized. Associations flourish within each group but wither between members of opposing groups. As the dispute intensifies, partisans form ad hoc groups which serve as communication centers within the group and which plan and organize meetings and other activities. These partisan groups are characterized by secrecy, spirited meetings, pamphleteering, and fund-raising. New leaders who have not been involved in the community in the past and who are inexperienced in handling community problems emerge as leaders of the partisan groups. They are seldom moderates and have not been conditioned to the prevailing community norms concerning tactics for dispute. Attempts may be made to bring community organizations in as the controversy

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develops (Lauderdale, Parker, Smith-Cunnien and Inverarity, 1984).

3. Reciprocal causation. One element in the controversy influences the next which, in turn, influences the first creating an endless spiral. This reciprocal causation or "vicious circle" phenomenon can be seen in a number of relationships.

There is a mutual reinforcement of response. In a relationship between individuals one person's reaction is contingent upon the reaction of the other, and vice versa. A smile or scowl by one results in a smile or scowl by the other. A chain of mutual reinforcement, friendly or otherwise, is established which is difficult to break.

A mutual effect of social and psychological polarization takes place. People talk only to those people who agree with them thus reinforcing their opinions. This polarization leads to a division of the community into two socially and attitudinally separate camps.

Polarization and intensity of feelings are mutually reinforced. As polarization increases, inconsistencies are driven out, an individual's feelings become more intense and polarization increases even more (Lauderdale et al., 1984).

"Gresham's Law of Conflict" is created by the process. That is, the moderates who would keep the conflict within bounds are driven out by the extremists. The desire to win is replaced by the desire to destroy the other side.

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Factors affecting the course of controversy. There are a number of factors which may affect the course of a controversy. Some of them are (a) the availability of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction, (b) characteristics of the community's social structure and (c) the mass media. According to Coleman (1957), the absence of existing internal procedures for expressing dissatisfaction may force an opposition group to find a leader and to attack the organization from outside.

The extent to which a community's social structure is integrated, also has an impact on the conflict. The level of social structure integration in a particular community is a function of the community members' identification with community groups, organizational density, interlocking of memberships and cross pressures exerted on parties to the conflict. If community members are highly involved in the community, there will be more controversies and people's feelings about the issues will be more intense but people's identification with the community will keep the controversy within certain bounds (Blau, 1982). In a town with high organizational density, that is, where there are many organizations and associations, the pressure to take sides on an issue is great and the whole community is likely to be pulled into the controversy (Knoke, 1982).

Interlocking memberships expose individual community members to a variety of points of view and work against the

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polarization of people into opposing camps. The combination of interlocking memberships and organizational density creates a potential for cross pressures in community members. The individual who has attachments to many organizations or elements in the community is subjected to cross pressures, the phenomenon of being pulled in many different directions. Such an individual often is unable to make a commitment to either side. That individual may withdraw from the dispute, or if s/he does take sides, s/he may be so beset by doubts and fears that s/he is unable to see the opposition as the enemy (Wood, 1983). To the degree that an integrated social structure is present in a community, it safeguards against the kind of conflict which creates permanent cleavage in a community.

The media carries out important functions in community conflict. Its direct persuasive effect is negligible since people select what they want to see and hear based on their preexisting opinions. It reinforces what people already believe. Indirectly, though, its effect may be great. Communication that starts with a newspaper or radio and is mediated by group discussions may ultimately have an important influence on the conflict. That is, local mass media may start a controversy by reporting certain events. The media can contribute to the continuation and to the nature of the conflict by informing people of events and views which are discussed by people in the community. Since

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people depend on their friends and neighbors in matters of opinion, these discussions may influence how people feel about the conflict. Thus, the media may indirectly influence the conflict.

Thomas: Process Model

A process model of dyadic conflict, developed by Thomas (1976), helps to explain the pattern of events which transpired from October 18, when the board voted to close Bach School, until December 20, when the board reaffirmed its decision. The model (see Figure 18) is an explanation of conflict that occurs between two social units (individuals, groups or organizations). Conflict is described as the "process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate some concern of his" (Thomas, 1976, p. 891). Concern is a blanket term which includes more specific concepts such as needs, desires, formal objectives and standards of behavior.

Frustration is experienced by one of the parties when one of his goals is not realized. A goal is the satisfaction of a need, desire, objective, standard of behavior or value.

Conceptualization occurs if the frustration is dealt with consciously by the party. It includes how the party defines the conflict issue and an awareness of the action alternatives and their probable outcomes for both parties (Kilman and Thomas, 1978).

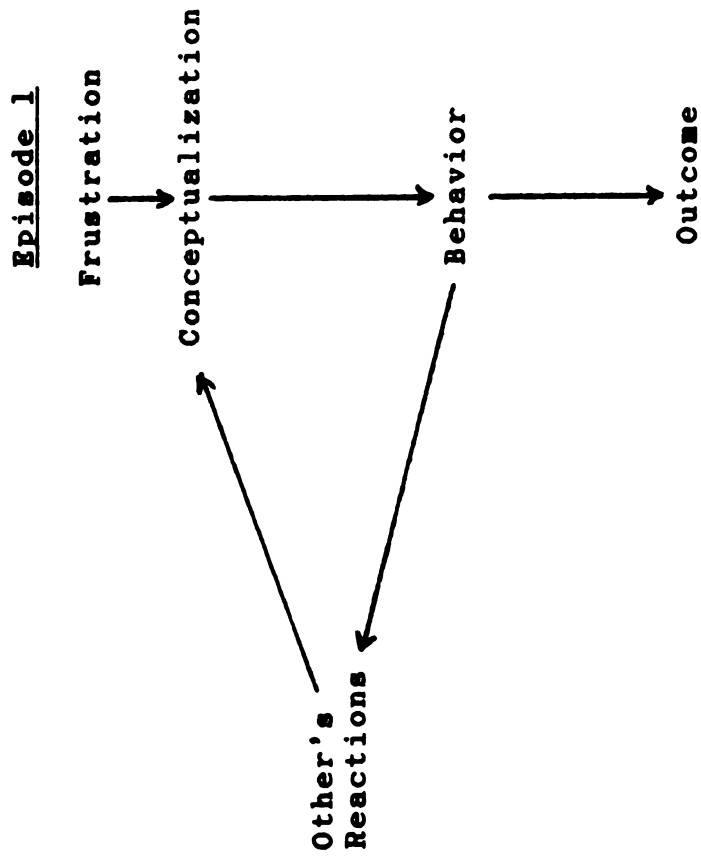


Figure 18

Process Model of Dyadic Conflict

Note. From "Conflict and Conflict Management" by K.W. Thomas, 1976, p.895, in M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company. Copyright c 1976 by Rand McNally College Publishing Company. Reprinted by permission of John Wiley and Sons.

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Behavior is engaged in by the party vis-a-vis the other party in order to cope with the situation. The behavior is based largely on the party's conceptualization of the situation and may include avoidance and withdrawal as well as other more active behaviors.

Other's. reactions are the actions taken by the other party in response to the behavior of the first party. An interaction takes place between the two where each party's behavior serves as a stimulus for the other's response. During the conflict, each party's conceptualization of the conflict issue may change as a result of this interaction, causing a corresponding change in the party's behavior.

Orientation and strategy. Conflicts may be resolved through the use of competition or cooperation (Baron, 1974; Thomas, 1976). If each party wants to satisfy its own concerns and has no desire to satisfy the other party's concerns, the conflict is competitive in nature. The degree to which a party is assertive in satisfying its own concerns is a function of its perceived stake in the conflict (Blake, Shepard and Mouton, 1964). The degree to which it wishes to cooperate with the other party in resolving the conflict is a function of its identification with the other party. If the parties have agreed in the past or have common goals, the good will between them will increase their tendency to cooperate with each other.

The strategic objective of each party depends upon what

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the party would prefer and what is believed possible, given the power and commitment of the other (Donnelly, 1971). The tactical behavior employed by parties who are in a competitive mode, that is who are trying to win at the expense of the other, is the use of various power bases to influence the other. Possible power bases include information power, referent power, legitimate power, expert power, coercive power and reward power. As hostility and distrust increase, a party's tactics tend to become coercive and other power bases become ineffective (Raven and Kruglanski, 1970).

An Outcome has occurred if the interaction stops. That outcome could be a joint agreement, domination by one party, joint avoidance of the issue or an unresolved disagreement. It sets the stage for subsequent episodes. Issues settled by the domination of one party are apt to recur (Aubert, 1963; Pondy, 1967).

Pattern of Events

Community Conflict

Initiation of dispute. Coleman (1957) suggests that an event may lead to organized opposition if that event touches an important aspect of community members' lives, if it affects the lives of different community members differently and if it is one on which community members think they can

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take action. Closing a school meets all these criteria. It impacts on the education of community members' children and on the property values of their homes, important issues to most people. It affects different people differently. While it was viewed negatively by some, others saw it as a way to avoid future cuts in educational programming and as a more efficient use of resources. Community members believed that the school closing issue was one on which they could take action. Both the opposition and the board's supporters attempted to influence the board's decision by speaking at meetings, writing letters and talking to board members. The opposition often discussed the possibility of using more drastic measures of persuasion: recall of board members, a court injunction and petitioning for a referendum.

Revolt against the administration. According to Coleman (1957), those conflicts that are revolts against the administration have certain characteristics in common. The Bach conflict was a revolt against the administration and the school board. In most people's minds the administration and school board were synonymous since the administration was hired to do the school board's bidding. As Coleman (1957) suggests is typical of such conflicts, the administration and school board became the defendants. The superintendent was attacked for "bringing in new ideas that might have been appropriate in his former school district downstate but were not appropriate for Eureka". The school

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board was attacked for "blindly following a poorly prepared report" (the superintendent's Future Building Needs Report). Board members were threatened with recall and a lawsuit. Later, when a lawsuit was filed, the superintendent and the school board were named as defendants.

A minority group, PINS, did oppose the administration, not because they wanted power nor because they were ideologically committed to a cause, but because they were opposed to an action taken by the administration and the board - the closing of Bach School.

The majority of the community members formed a large inactive group who were acquiescent towards the administration. That is, they passed millage renewals but were not actively involved in school issues.

There was no minority group who actively supported the administration and/or the board. There were isolated individuals who wrote letters, spoke at meetings and called board members to express their support, but they were not members of a group.

Specific acts by the administration did not bring about changes in the climate of opinion. The administration did not commit a series of blunders which were of importance to the passive majority. The community as a whole was concerned about an action taken by the administration and the board, closing Bach School.

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oppositionist group being able to use a newly hostile atmosphere to gain its own ends. Rather, PINS called attention to the school board/administrative action and asked other community members to make a judgement about that action. After a citizens task force supported the board's action, PINS turned its attention to other options.

Thus, the Bach School conflict does not fit Coleman's general process for the initiation of a revolt against the administration. The administration/school board were the defendants. A minority group did oppose the administration not for reasons of power or ideology but because they wanted to prevent an administrative decision from being implemented. A hostile climate had not been created by board and/or administrative blunders. Rather, an action which impacted upon an important area of community members' lives had occurred. PINS' actions called attention to this fact. Other community members evaluated and commented on the board/administration's handling of the school closing issue. A community judgement was rendered when a citizens task force reported its support for the board's decision. It would appear that another conflict process for administrative revolt, besides the one described by Coleman, exists.

Dynamic tendencies of conflict. New and different issues were added. Members of PINS attempted to generalize the conflict by bringing in new issues such as (a) the

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school closing's effect on the community's economy, (b) the use of relocatables (c) the sale of Central Office and (d) the fairness of the decision making process. During the course of the conflict, the dispute did become personalized. Members of the board became angry with members of PINS and vice versa. .

Social relationships did become polarized. Board members, and central administrators developed an esprit de corps among themselves. At the same time, relationships with members of the opposition deteriorated. Partisans (people who feel strongly about one side) formed a group which served as a communication center and which planned and organized meetings and other activities. The partisans' group, known as PINS, was also a constituent group in that its members shared the same interests. Partisan groups are a special type of constituent group. Their members feel so strongly about an issue that they hold secret, spirited meetings, and engage in pamphleteering and fund raising.

PINS met all those criteria. They met secretly on a number of occasions. Their comments at board meetings were certainly "spirited" and that was characteristic of their own meetings as well. They distributed flyers which explained their position and urged community members to contact board members asking for a delay in closing Bach. Funds were raised by asking for donations and by means of at least one bake sale.

Allison, the leader of the partisan group, was inexperienced in conflict resolution, as Coleman predicted. He was not an extremist, however, but was pushed into taking immoderate positions such as threatening the board with recall and lawsuits by the less moderate members of the partisan group.

Attempts were made to bring other community organizations into the controversy as it developed. The Downtown Business Association, the Chamber of Commerce and the South Neighborhood Action Group (SNAG) were each invited to take a stand on the issue. All of them declined.

There was some evidence of reciprocal causation, or what Coleman referred to as vicious circles. An attack on a board member by PINS' lawyer, Martin, brought forth a heated response from the board member. As noted earlier, there was some evidence of polarization as people's feelings became more intense. Board members and administrators began to develop an "us against them" attitude. While it was not noticeable at this stage, eventually the more moderate members of PINS drifted away leaving those who were more adamant in their opposition in control of the organization.

Factors affecting controversy's course. Three of the factors which can affect the course of a controversy are (a) the availability of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction, (b) characteristics of the community's social structure and (c) the mass media. Coleman (1957)

predicts that the absence of existing internal procedures for expressing dissatisfaction may force an opposition group to find a leader and to attack the organization from outside.

In the case of the school closing controversy, however, a partisan group formed and attacked the school board and superintendent in spite of the presence of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction. The public hearings on the superintendent's report provided a vehicle for the expression of dissatisfaction. There were also opportunities to speak at the three board meetings when the board members discussed the report before voting to close Bach. After the decision was made, board members listened to arguments put forth by Martin and Allison on a number of occasions. Still, members of PINS expressed their frustration that board members were not listening to their point of view. They seemed to believe that the board members had already made up their minds before the hearings were conducted. Straub recognized this when he said to them at one of the meetings, "Just because we don't agree with you it doesn't mean we don't listen."

It would seem that the mere presence of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction is not sufficient to prevent conflict. Those in opposition must believe that their comments are being heard and considered. No matter how many opportunities they have to speak, if they do not see

evidence that what have they said has influenced those to whom they have addressed their remarks, their perception is that no one is listening. Thus, the presence of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction is a necessary but insufficient basis for preventing the formation of partisan groups. Evidence that the dominant coalition has modified its stand in some way as a result of the opposition's expressions of dissatisfaction must also be present.

The community's social structure did influence the controversy. The fact that Eureka is a small town that prides itself on citizen involvement helps to explain the interest that people took in the school closing issue. The town is highly organized and many people belong to a number of different organizations. Members of the board and of the opposition group knew each other as members of the same church, social club, service club and/or as neighbors. As a result, many felt the cross pressures of being pulled in different directions and found it difficult to make a commitment to either side. The resulting doubts about the rightness of closing a school may have been the reason why some board members resisted making the decision and why one member abstained when the board voted to close a school. The cross pressures also acted as a constraint on the actions taken by board members. They may have been frustrated by Allison's and Martin's actions and comments but they knew the members of PINS as individuals and neighbors and

restrained their public comments. The one exception was the relationship between board members and Martin. He did not live in Eureka and was not a member of any organizations in the community. He was the one person who was personally attacked by a board member at one of the meetings at Bach School. Thus, the level of integration of the community's social structure both contributed to and constrained the conflict.

The mass media, especially the local newspaper, played an important role in the controversy. By reporting on the school closing and the subsequent actions taken by both the board and PINS, it served as a source of information to people in the community. In addition, it provided an important vehicle for PINS in the initiation and continuation of the conflict. The opposition generated support for its position by writing letters to the editor and by issuing press releases to the newspaper. The paper itself may not have directly influenced people's opinions about the school closing. Indirectly, however, it had a great impact because it was the vehicle by which both the board and PINS were able to influence community members.

Coleman (1957) helps us to understand why a school closing can lead to community conflict and the form that conflict might take. The actual conflict process, however, can be better understood by using Thomas' (1976) conflict process model.

Conflict Episode

Frustration. Most of members of the community whose children attended Bach School and/or who lived in its neighborhood experienced frustration when the board voted to close their school. That is, one or more of the members' goals was not realized. The parents wanted their children to continue to attend Bach, believing they were receiving a superior education there that would not be available in another school. The neighborhood residents were convinced that the property value of their homes would go down if the school were closed. Those parents who also lived in the neighborhood would be expected to experience an especially high level of frustration since two of their goals were frustrated. In fact, the members who founded PINS and who remained vocal in their opposition until after the court's judgement, were parents who lived in the Bach neighborhood. Since their stakes in the conflict were higher than either the Bach parents who lived on the river or those Bach residents who did not have children in the school, one would expect the closing issue to be of higher importance to them. As Fisher (1964) predicts, the more importance an issue has to a party, the more difficult it is to resolve the conflict.

Conceptualization. Hermann (1969) and Billings, Milburn and Schaalman (1980) suggest that an event that is characterized by time pressure (short response time) and

severity (important goals are threatened) will be perceived as a crisis. The expected response to crisis events is initial shock (numbed inaction) followed by defensive retreat (fighting back, refusal to change).

Bach parents and residents perceived the school's closing as a crisis event. There was little response time since the board voted to close Bach twelve hours after the superintendent's recommendation to do so appeared in the morning paper. The goals that were threatened by the decision were important: the education of their children and/or the value of their property.

Behavior. Those who opposed the closing responded as predicted by the crisis literature. That is, at first they did nothing except express surprise, disappointment, sadness, anger and resignation. The newspaper editor, along with many others, did not realize that the initial reaction of people who are experiencing a crisis is numb inaction. The editor and others mistook this inaction for acceptance of the board's decision and concluded that there was and would be no organized opposition to the closing.

After a period of time had passed, however, opposition began to surface. Someone circulated a petition asking the board to reconsider its decision. Another person invited some friends over to discuss what could be done to stop the board from closing Bach. The numbed inaction stage was followed by defensive retreat as the opposition fought to

prevent the change from occurring.

Other's reactions. Thus began an interaction between members of the dominant coalition (board members plus the superintendent) and members of PINS. As Thomas (1976) predicts, each party's behavior served as a stimulus for the other's response.

After the board indicated its intent to implement the school closing decision, PINS sponsored a public meeting. The community was urged to attend "to find out more of what this school closing will mean to all residents of Eureka and to decide what to do about it". Board members were also personally invited by phone.

The superintendent responded to the concerns, questions and misinformation which surfaced at that meeting in a letter to Bach parents. The board scheduled a meeting of its own at Bach School and tried to explain its rationale in closing the school.

PINS' representatives were allowed to speak at the meeting. They presented their demands to the board, asking for a response within one week. The board president agreed to schedule a discussion of PINS' concerns at the next board meeting, three weeks hence. He was unwilling to call a special meeting for an earlier date.

At a subsequent PINS meeting, the board president challenged those who opposed the school closing to provide the board with evidence that the community supported them.

PINS members responded to the challenge by canvassing the Eureka area and collecting 1100 signatures on petitions which asked the board to delay the closing of Bach for one year.

When these petitions were presented to the board as evidence of PINS' support in the community, the board referred the issue to one of its committees for study and a recommendation of what action, if any, the board should take. Two days later the committee recommended that the board appoint a citizens task force to study the relevant information, review the board's decision to close Bach and report its conclusions to the board in 12 days. The recommendation was approved, 4 to 3 and a task force appointed.

PINS, whose spokesperson had been appointed to the task force, transferred its attention from the board to the members of the task force. Providing members with information they had gathered, PINS members attempted to enlist the support of the task force. Their efforts came to naught, however, when the task force reported its support of the board decision to close Bach School.

Changes in conceptualization and behavior. As Thomas suggests may happen, during the conflict interaction each party changed its conceptualization of the conflict issue resulting in a change in the party's behavior. PINS changed from a rational strategy to one of political pressure. The

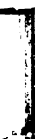
dominant coalition changed from avoidance to defensiveness.

PINS members started out by providing the board with additional information and by asking the board to reconsider its decision on the basis of this new information. They acted as though they thought the board had used a rational decision making paradigm in closing Bach. When providing additional information had no effect on the board's behavior, they changed strategies. Instead of trying to persuade the board to change its position by using facts, they used political pressure or coercive power. That is, they presented the board with petitions which, according to PINS, showed that the entire community, "not just Bach School people" was concerned. Their attorney, in commenting on the petition drive indicated,

We will circulate the petitions getting a general assessment of the people and present them to the board knowing we will lose. But it will put us in a political confrontation position and convince the board that it is wise to do an impact study.

This type of strategy, according to Jick and Murray (1983), reflects a perception that those who made the school closing decision were using a political decision making paradigm. Thus as PINS members' perception of the board's decision making paradigm changed from rational to political, their strategies changed from fact gathering and sharing to one of applying political pressure on board members.

The dominant coalition's concept of the conflict also changed as a result of the interaction. When PINS first



objected to the school closing and talked about various options it might consider using to stop the closing, board members ignored their reactions. As the superintendent said at the time, "there's bound to be people disappointed". Board members expected some negative reactions to their decision. When the petitions were presented to the board, however, there was a definite recognition by board members that political pressure was being exerted. Some board members reacted by reasserting their right, in fact their obligation, to make "the tough decisions". Others were concerned about keeping the support of the majority of the community and opted for a citizen review of the board's decision. This difference in conceptualization, as reflected in the cause maps of different board members (see Figure 19) was the basis for the 4:3 vote on the motion to appoint a citizen task force.

Competitive orientation. Each party wished to satisfy its own concerns and had no desire to satisfy the concerns of the other. The board wanted to close Bach. PINS wanted to prevent that from happening. Thus, the conflict could be depicted as a zero-sum game and was competitive in nature.

As the financial problems of the district increased and other alternative solutions (such as obtaining pay concessions from the teachers' union) appeared less likely, the board's stake in closing Bach increased, and board members became more assertive in trying to reach that goal.

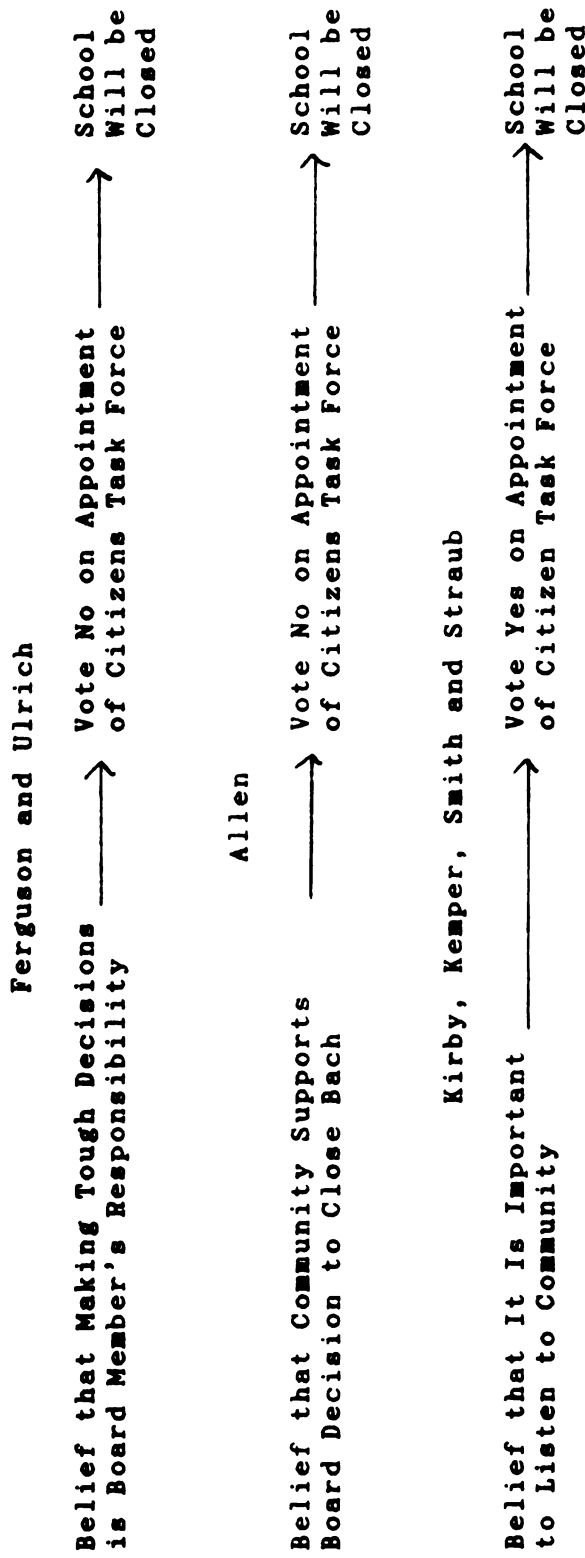


Figure 19

Board Members' Cause Maps: Appointing Citizens Task Force

Those members of PINS who were most assertive in trying to keep Bach open were those who had most at stake in the conflict, parents of Bach students who lived near the school.

One would expect that those board members who identified most closely with the members of PINS would have the most cooperative attitude in resolving the conflict (Thomas, 1976). Yet, Ulrich and Allen, both of whom had attended Bach as children and both of whom knew some of the members of PINS personally, were adamant in their opposition to PINS.

Ulrich was opposed to appointing a citizen task force in response to PINS' petition drive. She felt angry that "PINS was making us dance to their tune" and resented "the anger and animosity on the faces of some of those parents" at the board meeting when the petitions were presented. She felt the board had to "stand up and be counted" and that appointing a task force would be "setting up a second Board of Education". Allen was also uncooperative in his attitude toward PINS. He was angry that PINS had taken their concerns to the Downtown Business Association and the Chamber of Commerce and the newspapers. "They should have had the decency to talk to the superintendent or board members." He often talked of launching a petition drive in response to PINS' efforts and even tried to persuade a former board member to organize such an effort. Both he and Ulrich took

comments made by PINS members personally and were affronted that the board's decision was not accepted as a good solution to the district's financial problems.

Straub, on the other hand, who did not attend Bach but who had lived across the street from the school all his life and who knew many of the PINS members very well, was conciliatory in his attitude towards them. As he said in his remarks to the audience at a board meeting held at Bach School in November,

I've lived in this neighborhood all my life. I realize your concerns....We need your input. Just because we don't agree with you it doesn't mean we don't listen....We went into this with an open mind and will certainly consider what's been said tonight.

He voted for the establishment of a citizen task force in December saying,"...in the interest of fairness, the board should appoint the task force....Perhaps we haven't done a good job in explaining our point of view to the community."

Thus it would seem that the personality characteristics of individual members of each social unit who were party to the conflict would be an important factor in the degree of assertiveness or cooperativeness present on each side. Each party does not act as a monolith. Rather, individual members' conceptualizations and behaviors impact the action that is formally taken by a particular party.

Individual behaviors can also affect the outcome of the conflict directly since individuals may act outside the interaction that is taking place between the parties. The

board president, acting independently, forced Allison to invite him to attend a PINS meeting in November. At that time, he challenged PINS members to gather credible data which would show board members there was community opposition to the school closing. The petition drive was a result of that challenge.

Allison also chose to act independently. He met with the superintendent and assured Richards that PINS was not going to recall the board nor file a lawsuit. Yet three days later he told the newspaper that "if we have to do that (recall the board) to get them (the board) to reconsider, we will". He explained his private and public contradictory behaviors to me as being due to the fact that he personally was more conciliatory than some members of the group. While he was "dead set against recalling board members" some people in his group wanted it and he "might not be able to prevent their going for it". As he said, "I don't always agree with what appears in the paper over my name. That's the price of being a leader, I guess." When I relayed this conversation to the superintendent, he commented that he would "never let anybody put my name to a statement I didn't agree with". Allison, by his own admission, had not led a group of adults before and inexperience could account for some of his actions. Coleman (1957) suggests that leaders of groups which form in opposition to a particular event are usually inexperienced.

Blake and Mouton (1961) point out that social pressure from constituents is usually toward competitive behavior by the group's representative. This could account for Allison's public intransigence when he was representing PINS. It does not account for the board president's challenging PINS to convince the board of their support in the community, however. School board members were unhappy with his actions and were not pressuring him to be more competitive towards PINS. Personal characteristics of the individuals involved also seem to be a factor which may influence the conflict process. Thomas (1976) and Kilman and Thomas (1978) suggest that behavior dispositions of a party as well as social pressures of constituents on a party's representative have an influence on the conflict episode. Ferguson's competitive behaviors, for example, may have been due to his high need to exercise power or dominance (Raven and Kruglanski, 1970).

Individuals who were not acting as formal representatives of the party, also influenced the conflict outcome both directly as individual actors and indirectly as influences on group actions. One of the board members attempted on his own to organize a petition drive against PINS. The attempt was thwarted when the person he chose to organize it consulted with the superintendent before agreeing to do so. The superintendent convinced him that such an activity would be counter productive. One of PINS' members called some of the board members and threatened

them with recall unless they agreed to PINS' demands. These calls strengthened the resistance of those who received them.

Thus, the variables that need to be added to Thomas' process model are the behavioral dispositions, prior experiences, conceptualizations and behaviors of individual members of each party. The behaviors may affect the conflict directly through the individual actions taken by members of each party or indirectly as individuals influence the formal actions taken by the party.

Outcome. The interaction stopped when the board reaffirmed its decision after receiving support from the Citizen Task Force. The outcome was domination by one party, the dominant coalition. Since it was not accepted by the opposition, the stage was set for another episode in the conflict as predicted by Pondy (1967) and Thomas (1976).

Conflict Within the Dominant Coalition

Theoretical Perspective

March and Simon: Conflict in Organizations

According to March and Simon (1958), conflict occurs when an individual or a group experiences difficulty in making a decision. Individual conflict arises from any one of three sources: unacceptability, incomparability or uncertainty. Unacceptability occurs when the preferred

alternative is not good enough. Incomparability means the most preferred alternative cannot be identified. Uncertainty results when an individual does not know the probability of certain consequences occurring. The reaction of an individual to conflict, regardless of its source, is to reduce that conflict. If the source of conflict is unacceptability of the alternatives, a person will search for new alternatives. If that fails, the person will change the standard of acceptability. For a person experiencing conflict caused by incomparability, the choice of alternatives will depend on attention cues and order of presentation. If uncertainty is the source of conflict, a person will search for clarification and if that fails will search for new alternatives.

Uncertainty regarding the probable occurrence of certain outcomes increases if members of the organization are inexperienced or if the decisions are complex. A scarcity of acceptable alternatives will increase if there is a sudden decrease in environmental resources. During a business recession, for example, the aspiration level is greater than the level of achievement. There is a time lag between the differences that occur in the achievement level and the adjustments that are made in aspiration levels. Therefore, increased intraorganizational conflict would be expected to occur in times of economic recession.

Organizational conflict occurs when there is (a) an

absence of individual conflict, (b) a felt need for joint decision making and (c) a difference in goals or in perceptions of reality or both among participants in the organization. The commonality of individual goals is affected by the recruitment and socialization of participants. The differentiation of individual perceptions is affected by differences in goals and in sources of information (Pondy, 1967).

Organizations use four major processes in reacting to conflict: problem solving, persuasion, bargaining and politics. Problem solving is used to find a solution that meets shared criteria. Participants have shared objectives and look for new alternatives as a resolution to the conflict. Persuasion is an attempt to mediate disagreement over sub goals by referring to common goals which are shared. Participants try to show the consistency of specific sub goals with shared objectives. If there is a disagreement over goals, bargaining is used. The conflict is resolved by the use of power. Politics may also be used if there is goal disagreement. Other groups are brought in as allies to increase the power of a particular party. There is a tendency to resolve individual conflict through the use of the analytic process (problem solving and persuasion) and to resolve intergroup conflict through bargaining (Pfeffer, 1981).

Decision EventsHow Many Schools Should Be Closed and When

When the board realized that the original plan recommended by the superintendent, close two schools and move the sixth graders to a middle school, was not feasible because of unexpected increases in enrollment at the junior high school, there was a great deal of discussion about what to do. After considering a number of different alternatives, a motion was made to close one school at the end of the current school year. The motion passed, five yes, one no and one abstention.

Kemper, who abstained, was experiencing individual conflict. That is, she could not make up her mind which alternative to choose since none of them were acceptable. Her earlier comments regarding school closings were, " We have to be realistic and plan for it and then hope it doesn't happen." and "I dread it, but we have no choice." As March and Simon (1958) and Pfeffer (1981) have pointed out, this inability to find an acceptable solution often occurs when an organization is experiencing a sudden reduction in resources since the achievement level decreases more rapidly than the aspiration level can be adjusted. Eventually, when she could find no other alternatives that were any more acceptable, Kemper accepted the school closing alternative by changing her standard of acceptability. At one point she defended the school board's decision to close

Bach to a group of senior citizens and expressed amazement that they did not understand why it was necessary.

Kirby voted against the motion to close one school because he thought there were better alternatives. This was an example of conflict that occurred within the organization because of a difference in perception of reality. For Kirby, it was more important to save money and ultimately programs than it was to avoid changing attendance boundaries two years in a row. This difference in perception was due to differences in background and experiences among board members. Kirby had not been on the board when it had received a large amount of negative feedback for changing attendance boundaries several years previous. By his own admission, he had not realized until the board reaffirmed its decision in December that, "closing a school could be such a big deal".

Which School Should Be Closed

The vice president was given the task of checking with individual board members over the phone to see how they felt about the superintendent's recommendation to close Bach School. Initially the recommendation had three supporters, but it needed four votes to pass. Allen, Kirby and Smith supported the superintendent's recommendation. Kemper did not want to close any schools. Ferguson wanted to close Burns Park because "those people could handle it better than the Bach folks could". Straub wanted to close Tappan because

if we "have to sell it, Tappan would be more marketable." Ulrich, who could not decide between Tappan and Bach, said she might not be able to come to the meeting because she had a bad headache.

Kemper was still experiencing individual conflict due to an inability to find an acceptable alternative. Earlier, she had abstained when she could not make up her mind whether or not to close a school; now, closing any school was an unacceptable alternative. Ferguson and Straub were experiencing interpersonal conflict resulting from goal differentiation (March and Simon, 1958; Pfeffer, 1981). Ferguson's goal was to choose a school whose populace would best be able to handle the trauma associated with such an event. Straub's goal was to choose a school that would be the easiest to sell, if that became necessary. Their goal differentiation was due to differences in their experience and background. Ulrich's conflict was individual and was due to uncomparability. She could not decide which was the better alternative, closing Tappan or Bach.

Persuasion was used by the superintendent and the vice president to mediate the disagreement over subgoals. Straub was told that there would be no need to sell the closed building because of the uses the school district could make of it. If another elementary school were closed in the future, such as Tappan, for example, it could be the one that was sold. The arguments for closing Bach, rather than

Tappan were pointed out to Ulrich. Bargaining was used to resolve the conflict with Ferguson. There were three votes to support the superintendent and no one else agreed with Ferguson on closing Burns Park. He agreed to support closing Bach. Nothing anyone could say seemed to help Kemper to make up her mind.

Should a Citizens Task Force Be Appointed?

After the members of PINS presented the board with petitions bearing 1100 signatures and asking for a delay in the closing of Bach School, board members were in disagreement over what to do. The original plan had been for the board to reaffirm its decision to close Bach at its December meeting in response to the objections raised by members of PINS. When board members saw how many people had signed the petitions, however, they asked a board committee to review the petitions and to recommend a course of action to the board. The committee recommended the board appoint a citizens task force to be made up of prominent citizens from the community and the spokesperson for PINS, Tom Allison. There was conflict among the board members due to differences in perceptions of reality. Ulrich and Ferguson thought it was the board's responsibility to make "the tough decisions" and that this responsibility should not be delegated to another group. Allen thought the board had the support of the community and so the appointment of a task force was unnecessary. Kemper and Kirby thought it was

important to listen to the community and therefore favored the task force. Straub thought the task force might authenticate the method the board had used in arriving at the decision to close Bach. Smith hoped that the conflict with PINS might be resolved if Allison were appointed to the task force. .

While March and Simon's perspectives on conflict contribute to our understanding of the conflict situations that occurred among the members of the dominant coalition, another form of conflict resolution took place that they did not address. In organizations where decisions are reached by majority vote, conflict may not be entirely resolved. It is true that bargaining and persuasion are used to gain support for one position or another but the minority may still be opposed to the decision agreed to by the majority.

The norm among board members, however, is that once a decision is made by the board, everyone should publicly support that decision, regardless of how one felt before the vote. Thus, in some circumstances, conflict may not be resolved, but may merely be set aside. These residues of unresolved conflict may affect future board interactions on the same or different issues. As suggested by Pondy (1967) and Thomas (1976), when an outcome is imposed by one party the issue is apt to recur.

Conflict Model

A conflict model which reflects the writings of Coleman (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Thomas (1976) as modified by the events which transpired on the site between October 1, 1982 and December 20, 1982 appears in Figure 20. The model reflects an episode which begins with the frustration of a constituent group's concern (the closing of their school) and ends, at least temporarily, when the dominant coalition imposes their solution on the constituent group (a reaffirmation of their original decision to close a school). A description of the model variables and their relationships to each other follows.

Frustration is experienced by the members of a constituent group when one of their goals is not realized. A goal is the satisfaction of a need, desire, objective, standard of behavior or value.

Conceptualization occurs if the frustration is dealt with consciously by the members of the group. It includes how the constituent members define the conflict issue and an awareness of the action alternatives and their probable outcomes for both the constituent group and the dominant coalition. This variable is influenced by a number of other variables, namely characteristics of the frustration event, behavioral dispositions of constituent members, prior experience of constituent group members, discussion among

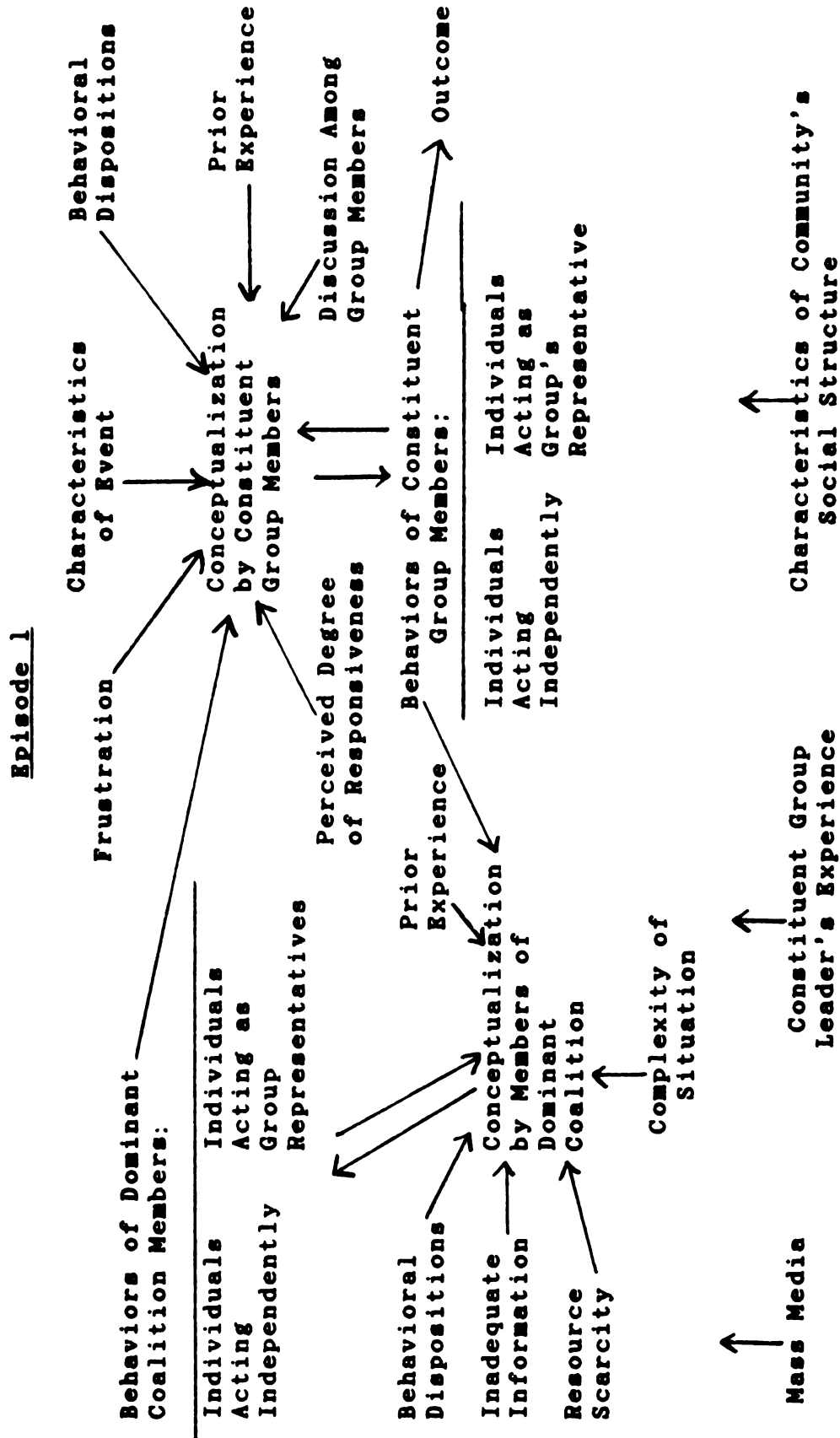


Figure 20

Conflict Model

constituent group members, the perceived degree of responsiveness exhibited by members of the dominant coalition, and the behaviors of constituent and dominant coalition members.

Characteristics of the frustration event. In order for the event to lead to a dispute, it must (a) touch an important aspect of constituent members' lives, (b) affect the lives of members of different constituent groups differently and (c) be one on which constituent group members think they can take action.

Behavioral dispositions of constituent group members. Individuals have a hierarchy of responses they can use in dealing with conflict situations (Berkowitz, 1962). The hierarchy is partially shaped by the person's motives and abilities. Competition, for example, is an outlet for individuals who have high needs to exercise power or dominance (Raven and Kruglanski, 1970).

Prior experience of constituent group members influence their perception of reality and the degree of commonality between their goals and those of other group members. These in turn impact on the conceptualization of the conflict by group members.

Discussion among constituent group members influences members' perceptions of reality and ultimately their conceptualization of the conflict.

The perceived degree of responsiveness exhibited by the members of the dominant coalition influences constituent group members' awareness of action alternatives and their probable outcomes for both the constituent group and the dominant coalition.

Behaviors of constituent group members take two forms: those of individuals acting independently and those of individuals acting as representatives of the constituent group. Each may have an influence on the conceptualization by members of the dominant coalition as well as that of constituent group members themselves. Behaviors of constituent group members also impact on conflict outcomes.

Conceptualization by members of the dominant coalition is influenced by the behavior dispositions of dominant coalition members, by the prior experience of dominant coalition members and by the discussion among dominant coalition members in a manner similar to that already discussed in relation to the conceptualization of constituent group members. The complexity of the situation and prior experience of dominant coalition members contribute to members' feelings of uncertainty. Resource scarcity contributes to members' feelings of unacceptability and inadequate information to incomparability. Uncertainty, unacceptability and incomparability are potential sources of individual conflict over conceptualization issues. When a member cannot choose a decision alternative, that individual

will be unable to act.

Complexity of the situation increases the uncertainty experienced by members in trying to choose a decision alternative. That is, the more complex the situation, the harder it is to predict the probable occurrence of certain outcomes.

Resource scarcity reduces the acceptable alternatives because achievement levels decrease faster than aspiration levels can be adjusted in a time of economic recession. This leads members to experience unacceptability in choosing a decision alternative.

Inadequate information prevents a member from identifying the preferred alternative. When a member experiences incomparability, the person does not know which decision is best and therefore is unable to make a decision.

Behavior of dominant coalition members is influenced by the conceptualization of its members. It may take two forms: individual action by dominant coalition members and/or an individual acting as a representative of the coalition. The behaviors may influence the conceptualization of constituent group members as well as that of dominant coalition members.

Characteristics of the community's social structure have an impact on the conflict episode. The level of integration of the community's social structure is a function of the community members' identification with community groups, organizational density, interlocking of

memberships and cross pressures exerted on people who are parties to the conflict. The greater the level of integration, the more likely it is that controversies will develop and the more likely it is that the members' identification with the community will keep the controversy within certain bounds.

Mass media affects the conflict episode indirectly by providing information about the actions taken by the parties to the conflict and by providing a vehicle for each party to try to influence other individuals in the community. This information and the attempts to persuade community members are mediated by group discussions among community members and may ultimately have an important influence on the conflict.

Constituent group leader's experience influences the episode. A leader who is inexperienced in handling community conflict may be unaware of the community's norms regarding conflict. If that is the case, conflict resolution may be more difficult.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONFLICT RESOLVED

Board and PINS Compete

PINS Members Quiet

After the board reaffirmed its decision to close Bach School on December 20, nothing was heard from PINS members for several weeks. A number of community members concluded that the controversy was over and that those who were initially opposed to the board's decision had finally accepted it.

This point of view was expressed at a meeting of high school graduates, counselors and teachers where several people commented on the ending of the Bach issue. "It's a good thing the board brought the Bach issue to a close before Christmas. It has been a stressful time."

A former mayor of the city commented, "I see the board has finally ended the Bach issue. It's like putting in side walks; some people are going to disagree. You know who not to vote for in the next election."

A Bach parent told me, "Maybe, since Allison was on the Task Force, PINS decided the school board was right in closing Bach and that's why there haven't been any more

complaints about closing Bach" (December 30, 1982).

At a party on New Year's Eve, a college administrator commented to me on the "community's acceptance" of the Bach closing. I told him there was "more than one community out there".

On January 4, the school board met for the first time since its decision on December 20 to "reaffirm the closing of Bach School". The Matthisons were the only individuals from Bach School in the audience. They did not say anything. No one raised any concerns about the future use of Bach or even mentioned the closing during the public hearing section of the meeting. The only people present, other than the Matthisons were those involved in making curriculum presentations to the board during the meeting (January 4, 1983).

The superintendent agreed with me that the meeting with Bach parents concerning the future use of Bach School should be open to the public. As he said, "This will give us more positive public relations with the community (January 5, 1982).

PINS Approaches the EEA

Several days later, the front page of the local paper carried the story, "PINS to Pursue Teachers' Union Support for Bach". According to the article, Allison had called the EEA president on December 10 to obtain some information for the Task Force and to seek support for PINS' position on the

Bach School closing issue. Jones, the president of the EEA, agreed to send Allison some information for the Task Force, but pointed out that

the provision of it should not be seen as support or non-support of their position. Rather, as educators, we recognize the importance of reviewing as much information as possible before making a decision.

She told him he would have to come to an executive board meeting if he wanted the EEA to take a position. The association subsequently sent Allison the following information for use by the Task Force.

1. The results of a national study on class size.
2. A 1980 EEA study on Eureka's portable classrooms.
3. District financial information which had been compiled the previous summer by a Michigan Education Association (MEA) research team in response to the school board's request for teacher concessions (Morning News, January 6, 1983).

On December 14, Martin, PINS' attorney, had written to the EEA, "formally requesting the EEA to take a position". In response to that letter, Jones called Allison on December 27 to see if he was still interested in addressing the EEA board at its January 6 meeting. In talking with a reporter about the meeting, Jones said the executive board would listen to Allison's presentation and review the letter from Martin. Then the board would either take a position immediately or gather more information before making a decision.

Additional information may involve checking with other teachers, or asking others to speak to the executive board. The executive board has the authority to take a position, but in decisions of great importance, our past practice has been to either survey our membership or take a formal vote.

She said that so far the EEA had not given support to PINS:

"Individuals may have, but the EEA has not."

Allison claimed that he had been invited to speak to the association's executive board by Mrs. Jones.

It was not a formal invitation - nothing in writing. They dug up a lot of information for us. They've been pretty helpful to us so far. If they decide to oppose the closing, the ball is on the roll again" (Morning News, January 6, 1983).

PINS Considers Referendum

Regardless of EEA's position, PINS planned to meet early in the next week to "plot a course of action" according to Allison. One option that was open to PINS was to "give the whole fight up. But, that's not going to be bought by a lot of people", he said. Another option, which Allison said he favored, was for the organization to circulate petitions requesting the school board to place a question regarding the Bach closing on the June election ballot. "We feel the community is divided. If the school district goes for a millage, I don't think it will pass" (Morning News, January 6, 1983).

That afternoon I saw the former editor of the local newspaper on the street. He commented on the Bach parents' reactions.

I can't believe the outcry you're getting from the Bach

parents. You'd have thought the school district was not letting the kids attend school at all from all the stuff in the papers. They got too emotional, too late, as far as I'm concerned (January 6, 1982).

Allen called me that evening to talk about PINS meeting with the teachers' union. He speculated that perhaps PINS was "interfering with the contract".

We can't cut any more programs....PINS will do what they want to do about recalling board members. We should sit tight and not say anything. But, if PINS gets union support and continues clamoring in the papers, we should get a group to gather petitions in support of the board. Otherwise, the community will think we are afraid to fight back (January 6, 1983).

EEA Tables PINS' Request

The next morning, the paper reported on the closed meeting, based on comments from the EEA president and PINS' representatives, Allison and Martin. The executive board tabled PINS' request that it take a position on the Bach closing, according to the EEA president. It agreed to discuss the issue again at its February 3 meeting after consulting with its members. PINS' arguments for the EEA endorsement were:

1. The school district might have difficulty in passing any future millage requests as long as the community was divided on the Bach issue.

2. The school district had not used the alternatives to the closing which PINS had offered.

Allison said his "gut feeling" after the meeting with the teachers was "very positive". While waiting for the EEA's response, PINS had scheduled a meeting for the following

Tuesday to "see where we stand", he said (Morning News, January 7, 1983).

The superintendent told me later that day that he had heard "indirectly from some teachers" that PINS had threatened the union.

If the association doesn't support PINS, they (PINS) will work against the millage. If the association does support them, PINS will support them if they strike when the contract expires (in June 1983). Members of PINS promised to walk the picket lines with the teachers January 7, 1983).

I heard a similar report from Ulrich three days later. She said some teachers had told her,

PINS threatened to boycott the millage if the teachers didn't support them. I told the teachers that some citizens would not support the millage if we didn't close Bach. Their consideration of the Bach issue has taken the lid back off the kettle again (January 10, 1983).

At a meeting with the superintendent, I asked him to try and obtain copies of the information the EEA had supplied PINS, especially the EEA report on the use of portables in the district. I expressed my concern that we think about what action it would be appropriate for us to take if the teachers' union were to support PINS. He said he thought the "opposition to closing Bach was dying out" and that the union would decide to "stay out of it. I don't think we'll have to close another school, based on the current enrollment projections", he said. (January 10, 1983).

Board Divided Over Administrative Staffing

Closing Bach required the elimination of one principal position. The superintendent recommended that administrators be reassigned but that the total number of positions remain the same. He believed that the district needed someone at Bach School to be in charge of the adult education programs that were planned for that site. The board was split over whether or not to support the superintendent's recommendation. Some board members were adamant in their opposition since the board had promised to eliminate one principal position when it closed Bach. They felt this action would "add fuel to the fire and strengthen PINS' hand" (January 11, 1983).

A member of CARE saw me on the street and commented that she thought the Bach Memorial Book was a good idea and would help to give people a "sense of closure" over the Bach issue (January 12, 1983).

Allen called me to share his concerns over the superintendent's recommended realignment of administrators. He wondered what effect it would have on PINS' attempts to get community support for their position. "If they do anything more, we should get a group to go out and build support for us by means of a petition or whatever. Somehow we've got to counteract PINS' rhetoric" (January 13, 1983).

The Personnel Committee met on January 13 to discuss the superintendent's plan for realigning administrators

along with the objections some board members had to the plan. The board president was opposed to postponing the decision for a month because, as he said, "I hate to keep slowing down the schedule for handling the Bach situation. He agreed only after Smith convinced him the committee had only four votes and maybe not that. The committee agreed that we did not want to "win this kind of issue by a four to three vote". Also, by postponing the decision one month, the teachers' union would already have met and decided what to do about PINS' request for their support. Our deciding not to eliminate an administrative position, after all, might be enough to "tip the balance" in favor of their supporting PINS. (The EEA had consistently criticized the board over the years for not eliminating "enough" administrators as enrollment declined.)

A Tappan parent talked to me about the Bach closing at a party.

I support the board's decision to close Bach, but you probably should have chosen Grove Corners because they never pass the millage anyway. I thought it was going to be Tappan. I wouldn't have minded that as long as the future use of the building had a positive effect on the neighborhood. It would be nice if the library were to move there. I can't understand that PINS group - they obviously don't know the facts. I talked with one of the people on the task force. He said that 90% of their time was spent in convincing Allison. Everytime they brought him around, he went home and talked to his wife and she got him fired up again. I believe the board will do what it says; all except one or two board members have credibility (January 15, 1983).

Kemper talked to me about the president's role in PINS' decision to circulate petitions.

If you just leave things alone, sometimes they go away, but Ferguson got them all riled up by offering them a challenge. He told them to show the board that other people supported them in a way that was credible and so they took around petitions (January 17, 1983).

PINS Reviews Their Options

The morning of the January 17 board meeting, the student newspaper carried a story about the possible options, PINS might use to stop the closing of Bach School. One of the options being considered was a recall election of school board members. According to Allison,

A recall possibility is there, but a recall of the entire board would be very negative because it would split the community and put PINS in a negative light. We don't want to be detrimental to the school board, but if closing the building becomes detrimental to the neighborhood, you're going to hear a lot of screaming by residents near Bach School.

Another PINS member agreed a recall would cause a rift in the community but said "PINS' input has not been adequately considered" by the board (Morning News, November 17, 1983).

In discussing the Task Force, Allison commented that the recommendations were arrived at by consensus but they were "not unanimous by a long shot" and "the Task Force didn't give two hoots about facts". Another avenue PINS was using in its attempt to stop the school closing was to gain the support of the teachers' union. "Their (EBA) support means an awful lot; (it would be) another ball of fire for us", according to Allison. A third option being considered was backing candidates for the two board positions "up for election in June". "Some people in the group are not

standing up like they could. We have to find out if we have any candidates", said the PINS' spokesman (Morning News January 17, 1983).

Tentative Plans for Bach School Revealed

At the board meeting that night, the superintendent presented his recommended plan for the use of Bach School. He suggested that the building be converted into a Community Education Center where enrichment classes in adult education as well as high school completion classes could be offered in the daytime and evening. In addition to meeting community needs, these classes would generate additional state aid funds since the students could be counted as part of the school district's membership in the state aid formula. The report was tabled until the February meeting to allow residents of the Bach neighborhood to comment on it at a public meeting before the board acted on the proposal. During the public hearing section of the meeting, there were no comments regarding the plan, but several PINS members asked questions regarding the use and disposal of the portables. The president said the matter would be discussed at a later meeting. The superintendent announced that the February state aid payment of \$315,000 had been delayed indefinitely due to the state's financial problems. No further information was available from the state at the present time (Board of Education Minutes, January 17, 1983).

EEA president Outlines Options

On January 26, board members were provided with two confidential pieces of information: a copy of the letter to EEA members from the EEA president regarding PINS' request for support and a legal opinion on a potential referendum concerning the closing of Bach School. The EEA president's letter outlined the following options as being available to the union:

1. Support the neighborhood school concept.
2. Form a coalition with PINS.
3. Oppose PINS.
4. Take a public or private position on:
 - a. The method used to determine if and which building to close.
 - b. The lack of seeking input from teachers/EEA in making these decisions.
 - c. The way parents have been treated.
 - d. Larger class sizes.
 - e. Moving students to portables.

The president went on to comment,

Incidentally, I believe the main reason that Tom Allison felt "positive" about our Executive Board meeting is that, unlike some board meetings, we listened, we were polite, and we asked questions for our clarification....The point is, we need to look at the issue openly and creatively (Letter to EEA members from EEA president, January 11, 1983).

The legal opinion on a potential referendum concerning the closing of Bach School stated that the board was

prevented from placing such a question on the ballot, by law. The question was purely administrative in nature and only legislative actions by the Board of Education could be submitted to the electorate for a vote. The only remedy available to persons seeking such a referendum would be to attempt to recall the individual members of the board of education "pursuant to the provisions of the School Code" (Letter to Superintendent from the District's Attorney, January 21, 1983).

Ulrich called me to talk about the EEA president's letter. She was "mad at the association" because of innuendos about the board not being polite to PINS. "We were always polite - PINS was the one that was discourteous." She had heard that members of the CARE group were "mad at the EEA for inviting Martin to their meeting". We should get CARE involved in support of the board, she thought.

They want to know why we haven't asked them. PINS is doing a lot of underhanded stuff. They are investigating portables without letting anyone know they are doing it. I don't think this is going to die down. We should do something. There is a lot of support for the board in the community. My minister's kids go to Bach and he supports the board's decision. He said he was sick of all the publicity PINS was getting. He thinks someone should do something to support the board (January 26, 1983).

The superintendent arranged a meeting of superintendents and board representatives from school districts in the area. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a common approach to negotiations since each of the districts had to renegotiate contracts with their teachers

in the spring. Discussion covered economic areas as well as non-economic areas of the contract. In discussing responses to reduced funding, one of the superintendents observed,

Instead of cutting educational programs across the board, we should cut specific programs that aren't so great, like the "Title" programs. But, these programs have traditionally had strong political support. It makes it hard to cut them (February 3, 1983).

EEA Decides Against Involvement

During the meeting, the phone rang; someone called to report that the teachers' union executive board had voted not to get involved in the Bach issue. Kirby, whose wife was a teacher and who had many contacts with teachers in the system commented,

The teachers just thought they were being polite in letting PINS talk to them. They never intended to get involved, except for one or two at the top who needed a big issue to get involved in (February 3, 1983).

At the February 7 board meeting, the superintendent announced that a public meeting would be held at Bach School on February 17 to discuss the future use of the building with the people in the neighborhood. A plan for the use of the building would be recommended to the board at its February 21 meeting (Board of Education Minutes, February 7, 1983).

Board members were also provided with copies of the 1980 EEA study on the condition of the portables. The study consisted of comments made by teachers who were using portables at the time. Some of the portables needed some work done on them: weather stripping around the windows,

carpets cleaned more frequently, the addition of eavestroughs and downspouts, protection of water pipes so they would not freeze in the winter time and the addition of toilets. Others seemed to be in good condition and the teachers in those relocatables had no complaints (Condition of Portable Buildings, March 1980).

A parent newsletter for Burns Park School outlined the principal's plans for integrating Bach parents and students who would be part of the Burns Park area the following fall. The principal wrote,

It is hoped the above mentioned activities (will) help to assist Bach families in moving from their building to ours. We eagerly await the infusion of tradition, support and cooperation we know they will bring with them. Their participation in our building can only serve to further strengthen Burns Park Elementary School (Burns Park Potpourri, February 11, 1983).

Public Hearing Held on Future Use of Bach School

On February 17, a meeting was held at Bach School to discuss the future use of the building with neighboring residents. The people in the audience consisted of 11 or 12 residents, four board members, five administrators and two neighborhood representatives. Comments by residents in response to the superintendent's presentation on the future use of the building included the following:

Resident: I hate to admit it; but it sounds good, especially the adult education programs.

Mr. Matthison: What will happen on the playground. I don't feel safe anymore with those strange adults around. I guess everyone is in favor of this, but I'm not in favor of closing the elementary school....The school district has lost something. The people of

Eureka, they are the school district. They have not been listened to by the school board at all. Their strategy is the same as that used in totalitarian countries. They hold small meetings so they don't have to listen to us. We are only a minority. 1,100 people signed those petitions but they were not listened to. The school board has not let the people have any say. All they're thinking about is making money (off the programs at Bach) so they can put in more curriculum. We don't need to add more curriculum, we need more basics.. If the school board is not going to listen to us.....The schools are founded on the elementary schools, if you take these away from people, the schools will go downhill.

Mrs. Matthison: Some of these things (adult programs proposed for Bach School) look good, but not at the expense of our children. This is an awful big price to pay. A lot of people said, "I'd go to that meeting tonight but it won't do any good. The petitions were ignored." You'd better listen now while there is still time.

Brown: I resent your concern for the indigent over concern for my child. You'll never convince me that a person on welfare is more deserving than my child (Morning News, February 18, 1983).

By the end of the meeting it seemed that people had resigned themselves to the closing of Bach. The Matthisons appeared to be the only ones who were still adamantly opposed. Neither the Allisons nor PINS' lawyer spoke at the meeting (February 17, 1983).

Allison did speak to a reporter after the meeting. He told the reporter that PINS' attorney, Bill Martin, was looking into other legal aspects of the Bach closing. He said he was disappointed with the small turnout of PINS members and others at the meeting (Morning News, February 18, 1983).

Since a number of people criticized the board from time

to time for not reducing the number of administrators when enrollment declined, I asked the superintendent for a comparison of the percent of administrative and teaching positions reduced. Over the last five years, he told me, the percent of teaching positions reduced has been 17.9%, the percent of administrative positions reduced has been 20.6%. I told him that we needed to use this information if we were criticized for not reducing the number of administrative positions as a result of closing Bach School (February 21, 1983).

Superintendent Recommends Plan for Use of Bach School

Approximately 40 people attended the February 21 board meeting when the superintendent recommended his plan for the use of Bach School. The board approved the plan to convert the elementary school into a Community Education Center where the district would provide the following programs: adult education, child care, vocational business classes, and Job Training Partnership Act and Economic Development programs. Rooms would also be rented to other groups such as a nearby community college and a cooperative nursery school (Board of Education Minutes, February 21, 1983).

PINS Responds

During the time allowed for public comments, PINS' attorney, Bill Martin, raised his usual concerns about the validity of the superintendent's enrollment projections and the school's finances. He reiterated his recommendation that

half of Bach be used for a neighborhood school while the other half be used to house central office administrators. Martin' only comment on the reassignment of administrators, which the board had adopted earlier in the meeting, was "I don't object to administrative staffing changes as long as they are based on new facts - then it makes sense (February 21, 1983).

Matthison, a member of PINS, also spoke.

The board is elected by the people but you are not listening to them. You ignored the petitions - you can't counteract them with a small group of people (the task force). This is what happens in Cambodia. Adult education is not ideal for the neighborhood. Those people are not a good type of people and it will increase traffic. When you start closing elementary schools, which are the foundation of the school district, the whole school district will start going down. Property values will not increase when you close a school. If we can't find a legal way to stop the closing, we will vote down the millage (February 21, 1983).

After the meeting, Mrs. Matthison told a reporter she did not know what action PINS would take next against the school board, but a recall vote was a possibility (Central Life, February 23, 1983). Martin told the reporter that the opposition to the school closing "is still alive". "The parents are still seeking a viable resolution to this. The opera isn't over until the fat lady sings" (Morning News, February 22, 1983 and Central Life, February 23, 1983).

A letter to the editor from one of PINS' members also appeared in the next morning's paper. She had been quoted in Friday's paper as "resenting that concern for indigents is

greater than the concern for my children". She felt that the comment had been taken out of context.

I think a community education center is a grand idea. The unemployed and welfare recipients should be given an opportunity to gain self esteem and training....That the school district has spent so much energy planning for day care, smoking areas, extra parking, new fences and new traffic signs to make Bach a center that has everything for adult programs while making NO effort to get our children out of those old, miserable portable units is what I resent (Morning News, February 22, 1983).

An editorial supporting the board's decision to close Bach appeared in the student newspaper.

A local citizens group claims it will continue to battle the closing of Bach Elementary School. What it has failed to realize, however, is the war is over....In each attempt made by PINS to justify the survival of Bach, the board has been more than willing to listen. However, it does not seem PINS has extended the same courtesy to the school board....We ask the PINS members to take a step back and weigh the advantages and disadvantages of the closing. Perhaps then they will realize the school board is doing what is best for the entire district....It will not be an easy adjustment for either the parents or the students. But it is the best solution financially and educationally (Central Life, February 23, 1983).

A Bach parent wrote to the local editor,

....Our school board, despite 1,100 signatures gathered in only a few days, has chosen not to listen to that representative 1,100...We voiced our opinions; we asked what we could do to prevent this closing; we were not given an answer. The decision was obviously made last summer before any meetings. I resent this type of representation....I hope the people of this community will remember how the school board and their superintendent represented them, either later on this issue, which is not dead, or during the next school board elections. If you don't feel you can agree with the board on this issue but you are unable to speak out for economic or business reasons, remember there is no signature on your ballot (Morning News, February 24, 1983).

The principal of Burns Park elementary school, to which some Bach students would be transferred in the fall, told me he had not received any negative comments from Bach parents. Parents of younger children seemed more concerned that those of older children. The later already knew many of the children in the new school because of their participation in city wide athletic programs (March 2, 1983).

The superintendent reported the latest developments in the Bach issue at a conference we had in March. Bach parents had not made any negative comments at a meeting regarding district plans to transport their children to different schools in the fall. He was concerned though, about the effect of the closing on staff morale. Bach teachers had more seniority than most of the other teachers in the district. Therefore, with the closing of Bach, they could bump any other elementary teacher in the district. According to the contract, the bumped teacher could then bump anyone with lower seniority. This process would work its way through the system until those with least seniority were left without jobs and would have to be laid off by the school board. Teachers were concerned because they did not know which school or grade they would be teaching in next fall (March 2, 1983).

Martin wrote a letter to Central Life protesting its editorial supporting the board's decision to close Bach. He suggested that the editor would have responded differently

if the "college were closed by Lansing. Surely a calm review of this rather complex issue might lead you to conclude the college community united with PINS holds the most promise for defending education against the budget axe (Central Life, March 9, 1983).

Kemper and I were approached by a college administrator while we were having lunch one Friday in March. He said, "I think the Bach situation has pretty much died down except for a few hold outs who will never be satisfied." We both agreed with him (March 18, 1983).

PINS Files a Civil Complaint in Circuit Court

That afternoon, the superintendent called to tell me that Martin, PINS attorney, had delivered some documents to him. The documents indicated a civil complaint against the school board and the superintendent had been filed in the circuit court. Attached to the complaint were a number of affidavits collected from people in the Bach neighborhood saying they purchased their homes because of Bach school and would suffer a loss in the value of their property if it were closed. PINS asked for a preliminary injunction and a temporary restraining order. The superintendent thought we should bring in Bob Anderson, an attorney from Lansing, and "get this squashed immediately". We agreed the board could go into closed session Monday night at the close of the regular board meeting "to discuss pending litigation" (March 18, 1983).

At the board meeting Monday night, four members of PINS were present, along with their attorney. The board approved the reassignment of the Bach School principal to Grove Corners. During the public hearing section of the meeting, the EEA president read a statement from the association indicating they thought the board "was being unfair by laying off teachers due to declining enrollment, but not administrators" (Board of Education Minutes, March 21, 1983).

Several of the PINS members also spoke at this time. They raised questions about when the rest of the relocatables would be sold, reminding the board that the Citizens Task Force had recommended disposing of them. Another member of the audience commented, "My son is in a portable at Tappan this year, and he thoroughly enjoys it."

Questions were also asked regarding the fire marshall's inspection of the boiler room at Tappan and the current enrollment in the elementary schools, which had increased by 25 pupils since the "Fourth Friday Count" in September. PINS' attorney made no comments (March 21, 1983).

During the closed session, Mr. Solomon, our school attorney, discussed the PINS civil suit.

Basically, Mr. Martin is stating that because of some possible violation of the conditions associated with the use of Central Office, the court should prevent the district from the closing of Bach School. Clearly, he is seeking a review of a legislative act by the school board in the courts. In absence of a showing in which the board acted illegally in the closure of Bach School, i.e., a violation of the Open Meetings Act,

which Mr. Martin does not appear to allege in his complaint, we believe that the complaint fails to state a sufficient cause of action upon which relief can be granted and accordingly, a Motion for the Summary Judgement to dismiss the action without a hearing on the merits would be in order....A number of other technical problems exist with respect to Mr. Martin's pleadings, any number of which could result in the striking or dismissal of the complaint.

Mr. Solomon then went on to outline the various errors Mr. Martin had made in filing the complaint.

Further, to the best of our knowledge, no Summons were issued in connection with the filing of this action, nor were the defendants served in a manner permitted by the Court Rules. Accordingly, the school board and the superintendent are not presently before the court in connection with this matter until such defects have been remedied (Letter to the Superintendent, read by the School Attorney, March 21, 1983).

Discussion followed:

We should let Martin stumble over his own shoestrings for awhile; rather than point out his errors. We should ignore the complaint until he "serves us" properly. We have nothing to lose and it gives us more time to prepare.

These people are like yapping dogs. We ought to kick them down. What they are doing is destructive to everything we are trying to do.

Let's get this thing squashed and show up Martin for the fool that he is.

The biggest tragedy of this whole thing is that these people are being led to believe by Martin that they can do something to reverse the decision to close Bach School and that's not going to happen. It's over. They are wasting their time and money trying to fight it.

That's right and there is nothing any of us could do or say that would change their minds about that.

Can we win this, even if it gets to court?

Attorney: Yes, no question about it.

There was a discussion about how the community would perceive the lawsuit if news of it "got into the paper". We agreed that the superintendent and the attorney would prepare a statement. The rest of us would refer any calls we received to the attorney. We wanted to make it clear to the community that we were confident of winning the case on substantive as well as technical issues (March 21, 1983).

Two days later Martin released the story to the newspaper. A front page article reported,

A group of Eureka citizens filed a request for a court injunction against the closing of Bach Elementary School. The request bearing affidavits from 18 members of PINS, seeks to block the closing of the school until after a court hearing on the matter, according to Bill Martin, attorney for the citizens (Morning News March 23, 1983).

The story also appeared in the college student paper.

PINS' spokesman, Tom Allison, said the request for an injunction was filed to try to keep Bach from being closed, and to convince the school board to close the administration office instead....At the February 22 meeting, Martin said PINS would continue to fight Bach's closing. One of the possible solutions at that time, mentioned by one PINS member was a recall election. Allison said a recall election still is a possibility if the request for an injunction is not approved (Central Life, March 25, 1983).

That evening I talked with a teacher whose husband taught at Bach School. Her opening comment was, "I'll come and see you in jail." She indicated that a number of teachers in the district were experiencing stress as a result of the Bach situation. One of the Bach teachers "couldn't sleep nights" because she felt so guilty about having to "bump someone else out of their job when Bach

closed". Others were concerned because "they don't know where they are going to be next year, or with whom". She thought the majority of the Bach parents had accepted the decision to close Bach School. "The problem is with the parents who live in the neighborhood surrounding the school. I think they will be very critical next year. No matter what the school does, it will be wrong." She believed that too much was being made of the situation, for example, PINS filing a lawsuit. "We would be better off, generally, if we realized that most situations are not that big a deal." The teacher asked if those teachers who were moving to other schools could have some help in moving their things, and concluded the conversation by saying, "I think it's good that you and Ulrich and Ferguson (sometimes) realize that community opinions are important" (March 25, 1983).

Although they opposed the Bach School closing, many Bach parents were friendly towards me in other situations. When a member of PINS joined the church of which I was a member, for example, she said, "Well, this is one time we're on the same side anyway (March 29, 1983).

I had coffee with Straub and he shared his thoughts with me on the Bach situation. Since he has lived across from the school for many years, he had contact with many of the people in the neighborhood.

Now that the lawsuit has been filed, PINS is losing more support in the community. This was the final straw as far as some people are concerned....One of the PINS group is running for school board....I think that many

people who signed the petitions did so because they didn't know what they were doing and because their neighbors asked them to do so (March 31, 1983).

Meanwhile, the board's attorney, James Solomon, filed a motion in circuit court claiming that notice of their request for the court injunction was improperly filed by members of PINS. According to Solomon, the judge would review the board's appeal before hearing PINS' request for an injunction on April 1 (Morning News, March 30, 1983).

Judge Postpones Hearing

As Solomon had predicted, the judge postponed the court hearing for a preliminary injunction to allow legal counsel for the plaintiffs, PINS, to refile the request properly. The judge took a second step which had not been anticipated. He cautioned the school district against entering any contracts with other educational institutions for the use of the Bach facility until the issue had been resolved (Morning News, April 2, 1983).

My minister expressed his concern regarding PINS' lawsuit to me,

What is the basis for the lawsuit - after a second group (the Citizens Task Force) looked at the data and agreed with the board, why prolong it? It's really a shame to delay it on a technicality; we need to move along on that issue and make arrangements for the use of the building (April 7, 1983).

PINS Files Amended Complaint

PINS' attorney filed an amended complaint in Circuit Court on April 8, 1983. The complaint alleged that the plaintiffs had been denied due process when Bach was closed

and that they would suffer property losses as a result of the school's being closed. They requested the court to:

1. grant a temporary restraining order enjoining the Defendant, its employees and agents from entering into any contracts or other agreements for the use of Bach School other than as an elementary school.

2. issue a preliminary injunction enjoining and restraining the Defendant, its employees and agents or others from proceeding with plans to close Bach as an elementary school pending a trial or hearing on the merits.

3. declare the decision of the Defendants of October 18, 1982 as invalid having no force or effect to close Bach School.

4. issue a protective order protecting Bach elementary school from being closed through any Board action for a period of two years from the date of this action. (First Amended Complaint filed against School Board and its Superintendent, April 8, 1983).

The superintendent informed me the next day that enrollment might "hold up better than we had anticipated", making it possible to layoff fewer teachers than we had originally anticipated. I was concerned. If enrollment did not drop as we had expected, then people would decide we had made the wrong decision in closing Bach and I might come to that conclusion, myself. I wished I had questioned the advisability of closing any school more rigorously. Matthison was correct when he pointed out that during the period of peak enrollment, we were using portables and now after closing a school we would continue to use portables. From their (PINS) point of view, why should their children be moved out of a school building and into a portable? I wondered if the problem of having too few students per school could have been "handled" differently.

Did the superintendent simply apply a solution (closing schools) he had used in another district (April 9, 1983).

In talking with the superintendent, he told me that the EEA wanted to include the people who would be teaching at the Bach Educational Center in their bargaining unit in order to strengthen the unit. "They have lost numbers" over the years because of the layoffs necessitated by declining enrollment and financial considerations. He said that "our counter" to this in the "up-coming contract negotiations" will be that those people who teach the adult education classes have more seniority than many teachers who are already in the bargaining unit. Thus, bringing them into the unit would result in many of the regular teachers being bumped from their jobs (April 9, 1983).

The superintendent informed me that he thought Judge Williams had made an error in appointing one of the members of the Tax Allocation Board. He (the superintendent) was reluctant to challenge the judge's appointment, however, because there was an "outside chance" that "we might get Williams as the judge for PINS' lawsuit and we don't want to antagonize him" (April 11, 1983).

PINS' Enters Candidate in School Board Election

Ulrich called me today about PINS' "running Matthison" in the June school board election. She had thought that PINS would,

run somebody stronger than Matthison. He doesn't have the name that Johnson and Jarvis (two other candidates

for the board seats) have. I don't think he is a strong candidate. I expected Tom Allison to run (April 11, 1983).

The names of those persons who had filed for the two vacant board seats were listed in the paper several days later. They included:

1. Current Board president, Mark Ferguson, who had served on the board for 12 years.

2. Ed Nelson, who had been defeated in the previous year's school board election.

3. Richard Johnson, who had served on the board for 8 years in the past but had been off the board for three years.

4. William Jarvis, who had also been on the board in the past but had been off for five years.

5. John Matthison, who was a member of PINS.
(Morning News, April 13, 1983).

An article on the effect the controversy over the Bach school closing was having on the community appeared in the college's student paper. Some saw the controversy as being divisive, "A small minority (PINS) has divided itself from the rest of the community. Frankly, I'm a little perturbed there has been such an uproar. The school board is doing the best it can." Others saw it as having a positive impact on those who were involved in the opposition. "The situation has drawn the whole neighborhood closer together and has made them more aware of school issues - at least that's one

good thing that has come of this."

Matthison believed the increased citizen interest and involvement would prove fruitless. "I don't think the school board wants people involved. They like to do things on their own. I'd like to see more people involved but there doesn't seem to be much they can do."

Some citizens were concerned that the closing would have an adverse effect on future millages. "We'll see the results of all this when the millage comes up - people will vote no."

Others disagreed. "If people believe in education, they will vote for the millage. It's the children who get hurt when millages fail."

The superintendent commented, "My feeling is that by this time next year, people will have completely forgotten about it. Students will still be getting a good education, and that's what counts (Central Life, April 13, 1983).

Superintendent and Board Secretary Served

On April 14, the superintendent informed the board that he and the board secretary had been legally served. The court date had been set for April 21 at 9:00 am and our attorney would ask for a summary judgement. He indicated that PINS had also filed a suit in the federal district court against the United States Department of Education, Federal Real Property Program. The suit asked the defendant to recover the former post office (now the central

administration office) from the school district since it was not following the terms of its agreement with the federal government (Memo to Board of Education, April 14, 1983 and Application for Writ of Mandamus filed by PINS in Federal District Court, # 83CV7068 BC).

The night before the court hearing on PINS' lawsuit, I talked with some college administrators and their spouses at a social function,

I see from Central Life that Bach School is about to be closed. They (PINS) are hard to convince aren't they? They just don't give up. John keeps saying, "can't they see the handwriting on the wall?" Their lawyer wants to keep it going - he's got them stirred up. Oops, I really do believe that, though.

Where were those people earlier? They waited too long to object.

Is it going to be settled now in the courts - will this be the end of it? I certainly hope so. Do they have any other recourse?

Their only other recourse is to recall the school board.

Oh, I don't think they would get enough signatures to do that, do you?

I certainly hope the hearing tomorrow is the end of it. (April 20, 1983).

Judge Denies Each Side's Request

The court hearing was held on April 21, 1983. After the three hour hearing, the judge denied PINS' request for an injunction to prevent the closing of Bach school in June, on the grounds that the attorney "had not proven irreparable or permanent damage would result if the injunction were not issued, and there was not sufficient probability that the

plaintiffs would succeed on the basis of the merits of the case."

The board's request for a summary judgement was also denied. The judge said that,

While it is a very close question as to whether or not (PINS) complaints are legally tenable, I'm still not willing to dismiss the case without further hearings. Therefore, a pre-trial hearing will be held within 30 days (Central Life, April 22, 1983).

Thus the issue was left unresolved and a trial would have to be held.

At lunch afterwards, our attorney, the board president, the superintendent and I met to discuss the morning's events. The attorney explained that the judge's denial of PINS' request for an injunction meant we could go ahead with our plans to close Bach and could enter into contracts for its use by other groups. He thought that the judge's comment, "that he thinks the probability of PINS winning the lawsuit is not great" was significant. He (the attorney) had 10 days to respond, which he would do. Then, we would wait and see what Martin did. If he did not schedule a pretrial hearing, the whole issue would just die. If he did, it could be two years before it came to trial. "By that time, the kids will be in other schools and the support group will have dwindled away."

The president exploded in anger, "That S.O.B. Fleming should have thrown it out instead of taking the middle ground." The superintendent also thought it would have been

better if the judge had thrown it out. "Now the community might think there is something to it (PINS' allegations). Although, most of the community supports the board on this issue." Ferguson complained, "Now I'll have to answer questions about the Bach School issue during my campaign, beginning at 4:00 pm today when I meet with the EEA (April 21, 1983).

There were a number of informal conversations about the Bach issue during the next four or five days.

Don't you think maybe the judge refused to throw the suit out for political reasons? If 1,100 people signed those petitions, he wouldn't want to make all those people mad at him.

That weasel (Martin) made me so nervous on the witness stand; I don't know why.

Someone in the community told me today that anything Martin was associated with was doomed to fail.

The superintendent told me that the adverse publicity from the lawsuit was "hurting us a little" in signing contracts for the use of Bach, but we were going ahead as planned. He was glad we did not have a millage election on the ballot this year. He said he had purposely chosen this year to close a school since he knew we would not have to ask for millage this June (April 25, 1983).

I discussed the Bach situation with Straub and Ferguson at a dinner meeting. Straub lived across the street from Bach. His neighbors had assumed he had voted against the decision to close Bach, he said. When they found out

otherwise,

I got a lot of phone calls from my neighbors. They couldn't believe I had voted to close Bach. After all the rational arguments were over with they always came back with, "By God, Ferguson wouldn't have let them close Grove Corners." And I said, "you're right. He probably wouldn't have, but I think after reading all the material, that closing Bach was the right decision.

Ferguson: Straub, you probably made your finest contribution as a board member in the way you handled the Bach situation (April 26, 1983).

Kemper commented at a committee meeting,

I worked at the hospital today and everyone wanted to know why we were closing Bach School. "It's such a nice school", they said. When I explained the reasons to them and that we would be using it for adult and community education, they said, "Oh, that's a good idea." How could they not know all this was going on? I guess a lot of people don't get the local newspaper (April 26, 1983)

The superintendent reported that the college was going to offer child care opportunities to its staff members and that they were interested in our day care program. "They could fill up the whole first floor of Bach. We could make a lot of money off that program."

The board president commented on his campaign interview by the EEA, "No one asked me a question about the Bach situation at the EEA candidates meeting yesterday, but I'll tell you, Matthison is running on the platform that the present board doesn't care about kids. (April 26, 1983).

Several practicing managers shared their thoughts about decline with me, prompted by the newspaper publicity about Bach. The college attorney remarked that,

The college is denying decline even exists. We have

decreased from 16,900 students to 15,900, but nobody is talking about it. We don't have a plan for where we're going or how we're going to get there. Organizational renewal is the answer. We have enough resources within the organization to solve these problems if we would just turn these people loose and let them be innovative. Instead we're getting increased "scapegoating" and decreased communication on this campus. No feedback is flowing up. Everyone is hiding under a rock and hoping not to be noticed (April 24, 1983).

On another occasion, the division director of a public utility mentioned how little we know about the management of decline.

We know how to grow, but not how to cut back. The company has laid off a lot of people. We need increases in the number of households to keep business going. People know you need more schools when the population is expanding, but they don't think you should reduce the number of schools when the population declines (April 26, 1983).

The PTA president at Tappan School, the school which the children of the more vocal PINS members would be attending next fall, shared her frustrations with me at a dinner meeting. She had tried to find a parent from that group to serve on the PTA board, but no one would do it even though PINS' members had been active in the Bach PTA.

Even those who don't agree with PINS are not willing to risk the ostracism of their neighbors by cooperating. John Matthison tried to tell me how awful the "portables" were but I was not very sympathetic because my son is in one and loves being there. I'm afraid I'm not at all sympathetic with PINS. They invited the SNAG (South Neighborhood Action Group) Board to meet with them early in their organizational activity. SNAG tried to dissuade them from resisting the closing of Bach, but they wouldn't listen. People at Tappan expected their school to be closed because it had been talked about for years, but the Bach parents were very surprised.

PINS Defends Its Actions

A letter to the editor from the officers of PINS seemed to reflect a defensive posture on their part. They had been receiving a lot of criticism because of their lawsuit against the school district, according to Straub, and apparently felt they needed to defend their actions.

The Eureka School Board would have the public sit by and never question their decisions, good or bad. The only time they want public input is at a millage election.

This past year, the board and the superintendent have made several decisions that indicate that perhaps they don't always have the best interest of the students in mind.

We have a right to attempt to guide our elected officials when we don't agree with their decisions. We have the right to check an elected body if its decision making process seems inconsistent and nepotistic. We have a right to let the elected body know that in no uncertain terms their function is to represent those who elected them.

We, the members of Partners In Neighborhood Schools, maintain that these principles are our motives for continuing our investigations with regard to the school district's decision to close Bach Elementary School.

We want to ensure that the children of Eureka Public Schools are foremost in the board's mind. We don't want to become a trendy, everchanging district. We want the sound, consistent, dependable system to survive these difficult times. If we continue to give in to "here today, gone tomorrow" educational fads, we will shortchange our future (Morning News, May 5, 1983).

That same day there was a notice in the paper about a bake sale PINS was sponsoring at a local supermarket. Donated baked goods were requested. It was the only public fund-raising activity that PINS conducted. I assumed they were trying to raise money to pay their attorney (Morning News, May 6, 1983).

On May 10, the school attorney submitted the school district's answers to the amended complaint by PINS. He asked that the court, "dismiss the Plaintiff's Complaint and award to your Defendants court costs and actual attorney fees incurred in the wrongful defense of this action" (Answer to Plaintiff's First Amended Complaint, May 10, 1983).

A pretrial hearing was set for May 20, with just the two attorneys in attendance. One of the items slated for consideration was the date for a court hearing (Memo to Board Members from the Superintendent, May 16, 1983).

Bach Teachers Reassigned

On May 18, the district's teachers participated in a job assignment and reassignment session.

Teachers chose their positions for the next school year based on their seniority ranking. If a teacher's current position was open, the staff member could take that job or could choose to teach a two-grade combination class. If a teacher's current position had already been selected by a teacher of higher seniority, the bumped staff member could pick from jobs not already taken.

However, the staff member must be educationally certified and qualified - according to the school district's provisions for qualification - for the position they choose, according to the assistant superintendent (Morning News, May 17, 1983).

The night before the session, one of the elementary teachers was very concerned about being bumped out of her current school. She asked me, "which school do you want to close, next? I want to avoid choosing that one to bump into" (May 17, 1983).

As a result of the closing of Bach School, the eleven elementary teacher positions at Bach were eliminated. The teachers who held those positions had high seniority in the district and therefore were able to bump into other jobs in the district. An elementary teacher, who described herself as "drained" after the reassignment session, said about 50% of all elementary school teachers would be relocated (Morning News, May 20, 1983).

The overall reduction in elementary teacher positions was only five, however, since the Bach students would be going to other district schools in the fall (Memo to Board Members from Assistant Superintendent, May 18, 1983).

An elementary teacher told me she thought the bumping process went very well this year. "It was fair; everyone knew all the information. In the past, some people made the wrong decision because they did not have all the information" (May 21, 1983).

Bach School Picnic

The Bach School PTA decided to sponsor a Family - Alumni Picnic as a farewell party for Bach alumni, their families and current Bach students and their families. Bach teachers, who had retired, were contacted so that they could also be recognized at the picnic. Former principals, school board members and the superintendent were also invited to the party. According to the school principal,

This is our last large get-together. The school closing has caused lots of mixed emotions for the staff. You

get kind of paternal; you're scattering my kids around. It's been a very happy experience, a very satisfying experience at Bach. You don't leave 14 years of blood, toil and sweat - but it has to happen; you have to move on. There is a sense of regret, but you make the best of it and move on (Morning News, May 21, 1983).

Meanwhile, a trial date was agreed upon by both parties' legal counsel in the suit filed by the citizens' group, Partners In Neighborhood Schools, against the Eureka School District and its Superintendent. The trial date was set for July 11, 1983 in the county circuit court (Morning News, May 21, 1983).

In the last Bach School newsletter, the principal shared his thoughts about the Bach closing with the student's parents.

My life is richer for having known you, and the neat thing is that I get to meet and become acquainted with a whole new group of kids and parents at Grove Corners next year. I hope you are able to approach the change for you and your children in the same way - as an opportunity, not a problem. Thank you again. I am indeed a fortunate man (Bach Newsletter, May 20, 1983).

A letter to the editor from the Bach School PTA, early in June, thanked those who had contributed to the Bach School Alumni Family Potluck.

Everyone who attended the potluck had such a great time visiting with friends, neighbors and especially former Bach School staff. It's just too bad that we had to come together for such a sad occasion as the closing of our school (Morning News, June 2, 1983).

When I read it, I was reminded of the picnic. The more insistent members of PINS had not come, although the Matthisons had. He might have come because he was running for school board and the election was only a week away. Most

of the people there were those who lived in the neighborhood. I saw only one family from the subdivision on the river. Some of the former teachers were there. One said, "This is a sad occasion, isn't it?" People seemed to have a good time reminiscing about the past. Many of the parents had gone to Bach as children. The students participated in a balloon - o - gram project where they attached notes to balloons and then released the balloons into the evening sky. It was a nice closing to the evening and hopefully to the whole Bach closing issue. The Bach students had visited their new schools several days before the picnic and according to one of the teachers, "most of the kids came back feeling positive". Even though the court case was still going on, people seemed to be resigned to the fact that the school would be closed (June 2, 1983).

Last Day at Bach School

June 8 was the last day Bach would be used as an elementary school. It was a sad day but also a day for looking forward to new experiences and friends. One teacher remarked,

I was a bit teary when I watched the last one get on the bus. It's this way every year but especially this year - the passing of an era. We're always anticipating the next year - there are always changes in teaching. Teachers are looking at their reassignment as a change and a new way to grow.

A first grader commented, "I feel sad because everyone else is going to different schools, but I do know some friends at the other school." The principal said, "I'm

emotional. I'd be less than honest to say I wasn't. There's bound to be a certain amount of emotion. You don't spend 14, 15 or 16 years without developing some sense of belonging."

When the final bell rang, the teachers led their students in a single line toward the exit. The principal stood with blurry-eyed Bach teachers by the school's front door saying good-bye to students with hugs, a wave of the hand and a smile. The principal asked a student, "What's all this hugging about? Get on down the road" (Morning News, June 9, 1983).

PINS Wins in the Voting Booth

School Board Campaign

As the school board election drew closer, the campaign for the two vacant seats intensified. Ferguson, the board president, had served on the board for 12 years and stressed this experience as his primary qualification for the office. Johnson, who had been on the board previously, also emphasized his prior board experience as well as his understanding of business practices.

Matthison, supported by PINS of which he was an active member, was a newcomer to the board although not to the community. He was concerned about the curriculum being taught in the schools, believing that the students were not receiving a "proper education in reading, writing, and arithmetic. They (the district) got away from relying on

basics in education. They're pushing more vocational and easier courses which get children through school." Matthison was also concerned about the board's lack of communication with the public. "They didn't want to listen to what people had to say....Seven people shouldn't run the school district. They are elected by the people and people should have their say and know how money is being spent."

Jarvis, another former board member and a college professor, felt that his presence on the board would give a "teacher's point of view" and lead to a more cooperative relationship between the EEA and the board. "The board must maintain a good cooperative approach to solving problems."

The fifth candidate, Nelson, was a local businessman. He offered his business experience as a reason for voter support. "Schools run like businesses. Business experience can help." He too was concerned about communication. "If citizens are informed with what is going on in the schools, they may become more willing to pass millages" (Morning News, June 7, 1983).

The EEA offered the candidates an opportunity to present their views on a number of issues. The association distributed the information to its membership, as well as to other MEA members who lived in the school district. On the issue of closing elementary schools and the middle school concept, the candidates expressed a variety of opinions.

Jarvis: To provide efficient educational programs I believe it is necessary to study population shifts.

This may result in re-defining neighborhood school boundaries and closing schools. I am open to the middle school concept, but tend to resist change unless I believe the overall educational program is improved.

Nelson: The middle school concept should help make the transition from a child learning - to young adults making decisions. I do not like to see the closing of any school or unnecessary busing of children, however, under certain times and circumstances the situation may mandate this for survival.

Ferguson: The Middle School Committee will make their report in October and then with consideration from the board, the changes made will continue our fine programs.

Matthison: The middle school concept I believe is the administrators telling me it's OK to push my kids faster into maturity and as a parent I feel the administration is wrong.

Johnson: My thoughts on the middle school concept are still open....The closing of schools is always an emotional issue. I do not see any reason why any school should be kept open if the board can save money.

Neither Ferguson nor Matthison expressed an opinion on closing elementary schools even though they had been protagonists on this issue for a number of months. Both of them did express their views on the proportional reduction of teachers and administrators, however. Ferguson maintained that the board had "made personnel cuts where necessary" and that the statistics showed "that these cuts have direct relationship with each other".

Matthison, on the other hand, saw it differently,

Administrators are a necessary evil, but keep them to an absolute minimum. The ratio of students to teachers is called grass roots education. The ratio of administrators to teachers is called economics and I would rather spend my money on education (Written information provided to EEA members by the EEA, May 26, 1983).

Several days before the election, the school board hosted a luncheon for retiring teachers. The wife of one of the retirees asked the board president, "Well, is the school district going to survive the closing of Bach school?"

He replied, "Oh, yes, we will survive. Of course, if Matthison wins the election Monday and I lose, then I will not have survived the Bach School closing" (June 10, 1983).

Ferguson Defeated by Matthison

His words turned out to be prophetic. Matthison, the top vote getter, received 1,035 votes (42.9%). Martin, who received 964 votes, (39.9%) was also elected. Ferguson came in fourth in the field of five, receiving only 858 votes (35.5%). Of those who voted, 459 (19%) chose to vote for only one candidate, trying to ensure that their candidate would be elected (Morning News, June 14, 1983).

The reasons for Ferguson's defeat were discussed many times in the ensuing weeks. The election results were first made public at the computer center where the ballots had been tabulated. Board members, administrators, teachers, candidates and their families were present. There was a stunned silence when the outcome was announced. Then people offered congratulations and condolences to the candidates. The superintendent's wife asked, "Does this mean a vote of no confidence in the superintendent?" A local minister replied, "No, it's an indication of unhappiness in the district." (June 13, 1983).

In a newspaper article analyzing the election results, Matthison claimed that the voters had given the Board of Education members a message. "I think the voters sent a message to the school board that they weren't happy with the way things are run and that changes need to be made." He said his stand on keeping Bach open could also have been "part of the message" (Morning News, June 14, 1983).

Conversations with board members indicated they thought it was more complicated than just the Bach closing. While the closing played an important part in his defeat, the board president's style also had cost him some votes, according to them (June 14 and 18, 1983).

A newspaper analysis of the election attributed his defeat to the fact that he had offended two groups of people in the community: those who opposed the closing of Bach Elementary School, and a number of teachers (Morning News, August 3, 1983).

Martin offered his explanation in a letter to the editor. He believed that Ferguson had lost because,

The school board rejected citizen input and then sent Mr. Ferguson off as the sole flag bearer where the voters were able to have their vote counted....To say he lost because of his personality is to miss the significance of the vote....If the public is only listened to at elections and millage votes, then more such "surprising" decisions can be expected - these are votes on the "sense of community" and surprise those out of touch with the community (Morning News, August 13, 1983).

Board Wins in the CourtsPINS' Offer of Settlement Rejected

Before the new board members could be sworn into office, we were faced with another decision on the Bach issue. On June 30, the superintendent showed me a letter our attorney had received from Martin, PINS' attorney. It was an offer of settlement from PINS.

Martin stated that "PINS believes it represented the majority opinion within the school system" citing the 1,100 signatures on PINS' petitions and the recent election results as evidence.

Even though PINS has a reasonable case and apparently the political strength to recall board members and affect future millage elections, they desire to resolve this matter without the injurious side effects of these political solutions.

He offered the board a deal,

If the Defendant Board will reverse their decision to close Bach for the 83-84 year, PINS will dismiss the pending cases and agree not to pursue their political avenues of recall and millage politics. Furthermore, if actual enrollment in the elementary schools declines, PINS will not unreasonably oppose future closings (Offer of Settlement, June 30, 1983).

I did not believe that all of the people who voted against Ferguson or for Matthison were indicating their unhappiness with the board over the Bach closing, as the letter suggested. Also, I thought that the rest of the community "would have our necks" for giving in to threats and intimidation. The parents of those children who had been reassigned to other schools, who had already said

their goodbyes, would not thank us for reneging on our decision and putting them back in Bach (an exception would be the members of PINS, obviously). The superintendent wanted to tell them to "stick it" (June 30, 1983).

I talked with Allen the next night to tell him about the letter. He exploded and said that "the business about the community supporting PINS" as reflected in the election, was "just a bunch of crap" (July 1, 1983).

At the board meeting the following Monday, the board elected officers for the coming year. I (Smith) was elected president and Allen, vice president. At the end of the meeting the board went into closed session to "discuss pending litigation", a legal reason for meeting without the public.

Solomon the board's attorney, discussed PINS' proposed settlement. He believed that, "while all they are asking for is for Bach to be left open for 1983-84, they will never agree to closing it because they won't accept our figures on enrollment decline." He opposed the board's accepting Martin's proposal because:

1. It was too late to be "second guessing" our decision to close Bach. If we were to do so, every board decision would be rehashed.
2. The proposal was simply a desperate attempt to save face.
3. If we gave in to threats of "recall and millage

politics" there would be "more problems down the road" and it would "weaken the board".

Discussion by board members followed.

Johnson: I don't like being threatened. I think we should just ignore the letter.

Straub: Well, I guess we could just take it. We have taken criticism before, even when we know we've been right. Let's tell them we are willing to drop the whole thing, with no hard feelings. I don't like costing them (PINS) any more money.

Allen: No, the community is waiting to hear a decision. Who is right? PINS or the school district? We need to have it go forward. It's too late for either side to pull out.

Ulrich and Johnson agreed with Allen.

Matthison: Those people will never give up. I still don't understand why you closed Bach. That building will be boarded up and supported by the state - just like in Detroit.

With the exception of Matthison, the board agreed to do nothing about PINS' offer and to let the case go to trial the following Monday. Matthison commented,

I still don't agree. I am a member of PINS. I don't believe it was necessary to close Bach. I will sit with them (PINS) at the trial, but I won't convey your remarks to Bill (Martin), but I know things about them I'm not telling you either.

Smith: We'll probably never have a meeting of the minds on that one.

Matthison: I guess that's right.

Solomon went on to point out that the remaining issue to be settled by the court was: "Does the school board have the authority to make certain decisions, and does the court have the right to review those decisions" (Closed Board

Meeting, July 7, 1983).

The next day the superintendent, the board attorney and I met to discuss the board's defense. I agreed to review my notes so as to be prepared to defend the board's decision and the process whereby it arrived at that decision (July 7, 1983).

On Thursday of that week, Allison released part of PINS' offer of settlement to the local newspaper. He said the offer read in part, "if defendant board will reverse its decision to close Bach for 1983-84 school year, PINS will dismiss pending case and agree not to pursue political avenues of recall and millage politics." If the board did not accept the compromise and if the judge ruled in favor of the school district, Allison said possible action by PINS might be a "recall of board members". Or "another avenue open to PINS" was an organized campaign against renewing the district's millage that summer (Morning News, July 9, 1983).

In talking with board members on the phone about their desired committee assignments, several commented on the newspaper article about PINS' offer.

Ulrich: A lot of people are mad at PINS for threatening to recall the board and to work against the millage.

Allen: I haven't gotten any feedback on it. It's time to put it to rest. People think we are doing the right thing. PINS doesn't have as much support as they think they do. The rest of the community would not support a millage to keep Bach open.

Straub: I haven't heard any comments from anyone in the community about PINS' offer. (July 10, 1983).

The Trial

The trial opened at 9:00 am on Monday, July 11, 1983. After hearing five hours of testimony by both sides, the judge announced he would "take the matter under advisement" and give his decision on Wednesday July 20 at 3:30 pm (July 11, 1983).

The next day a college faculty member commented on the Bach case.

Boy, those people just will not give up, will they. I can't see any legal reason for over turning the board's decision. It seems to me that they (PINS) are just grasping at technicalities. Does Martin just have those people convinced they can win? (July 12, 1983).

Several days later, I visited Agricultural Day activities at a local farm. Many community leaders were there. Several asked me about the status of the Bach case because they "had not been following it". None of them supported PINS' point of view. One expressed her concern about the threats of recall. "Everyone is so quick to talk recall these days. If they don't like one decision you made, they threaten you with recall. I think it's most unfortunate, in fact, it's stupid."

The person who drove the bus back to town volunteered the information that he lived next to Allison. He had signed PINS' petition because he wanted the issue "to get talked about as much as possible" before a decision was made. He recognized, however, that "in these times, agencies have to make cuts". He thought that the people who had children in

Bach School "still felt pretty strongly" about the issue (July 14, 1983).

Judge Announces Decision

On Wednesday, July 20, 1983 at 3:30 pm, we appeared in court to hear the judge's decision on the Bach lawsuit. The judge dismissed the case, saying in part,

This court cannot imagine a situation where a public body could do more to involve local citizens in a decisional process....The real complaint of the plaintiffs may be that the board closed Bach. If the board had closed another school, perhaps this case would have just had a different plaintiff.

Therefore, this court finds, one, in every instance the board acted fairly; two, procedural and substantive due process were observed; three, the school board and Defendant Richards acted within legal limits and their authority was legally exercised; four, there was absolutely no evidence of any malicious intent on behalf of any of the defendants, and that the action of defendant board and Richards were not of a capricious or arbitrary nature. Their actions did not in any sense of the word involve any corrupt conduct, and the actions of the defendants arose from the exercise of judgment and discretion that the law vested in them (Bench Opinion Given by Circuit Judge, July 20, 1983, 3:30 pm).

After the judge left the chambers, the reporters crowded around Allison and Martin. We speculated among ourselves as to what PINS might do next. Would they try to recall us? Ulrich did not think they would "stand a chance" of doing that. Ferguson commented on the judge's decision.

It was well thought out. That's why we didn't get a summary judgement last April. The judge wanted to lay it out to his constituents (the reasons for denying PINS). It's also to our advantage. PINS had their day in court and they were rejected (July 20, 1983).

In a newspaper article reporting on the judge's decision and PINS' reaction, Allison said the group would be

meeting within a week to decide what step to take next. While recall was a possibility, it "personally was always my last choice. It affects an enormous amount of people in the community and I haven't yet heard of one not referred to as a blood bath."

Board president Smith acknowledged the right of PINS members to begin a recall attempt but noted that an organized effort to discourage the renewal of the district's millage would hurt the school children. "It would be very unfortunate. The people who would suffer would be the children. It does not penalize school board members or administrators but just diminishes the education of children (Morning News, July 21, 1983).

PINS Drops Its Fight

On July 26, Allison announced that PINS had decided to "drop its fight to re open Bach Elementary School. It looks from this end we will let it go as is. We're not going to pursue the Bach School deal....We're not going to pursue a recall (Morning News, July 26, 1983).

Many people spoke to me in the next several weeks about the teacher's contract, but only two mentioned the Bach issue. Both expressed their unhappiness with PINS. A dentist told me a member of PINS had come in to have his teeth "fixed". The dentist jokingly asked him, "Are you going to be good or do I have to get nasty here?" A second person, also unhappy with PINS, remarked, "that was a terrible

lawsuit filed against the board".

The final word on the Bach closing came in August when the school board announced that the building would be reopened in the fall as the Bach Lifelong Learning Center. The building was expected to be used for adult education, high school completion classes, child care, vocational business classes, and community meetings and activities (Eureka Public Schools Newsletter, August, 1983).

Summary

For two weeks after the school board reaffirmed its decision to close Bach School, nothing was heard from the opposition. The silence was broken on January 6 when an article about PINS' attempt to get support from the teachers' association appeared in the local paper. After threatening to recall the board or to petition for a referendum, PINS filed a civil complaint against the board and the superintendent in circuit court. The board refused a settlement offered by PINS. Subsequently, the case was dismissed. PINS was successful in replacing the incumbent board president, who was running for reelection, with one of their own members.

Epilogue

One year later, in June 1984, Smith who had defended the board's decision to close Bach at numerous board meetings as well as in the court room, was reelected to the

board. Receiving 41.9% of the vote, she was the highest "vote getter" of the three persons running for the two board vacancies. Even in the Bach precinct, she received more votes than the other two candidates, getting 41.6% of the total vote. Smith lost in only one precinct, Grove Corners, the home town of one of the candidates (Election Results, June 30, 1984).

A request to renew 9.3 mills for five years was also on the ballot. It passed better than two to one. The number of negative votes cast was the lowest in the school district's history. The millage passed in every precinct except Grove Corners which had not passed a millage proposal since it came into the district a number of years ago. In the Bach precinct, the millage passed three to one, even better than for the district as a whole (Election Results, June 30, 1984).

A report on Bach School utilization during the 1983-84 school year indicated that all 13 of the rooms were used during the daytime and/or evening hours. Financially, the net gain for the school district was \$118,694; \$86,000 more than had been projected. The higher than expected revenue was primarily due to the offering of daytime adult education classes at Bach and the generation of 94 "full - time - equated" adult education pupils which resulted. State law permits the inclusion of these full - time - equated pupils in the membership count used to compute state aid. The adult

education program at Bach was responsible for the district receiving \$226,916 more than it otherwise would have received, an increase of 14.7% (Bach School Utilization 1983-84; November 2, 1984).

CHAPTER EIGHT

THIRD PARTIES RESOLVE CONFLICT

Conflict Episode

Application of Model to Episode Two

As predicted by Pondy (1967) and Thomas (1976), the conflict outcome which had been dominated by one party, the dominant coalition, was not accepted by the opposition. Thus the stage was set for another conflict episode. The conflict model, shown in Figure 21, was based on the writings of Coleman (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Thomas (1976) as modified by the events which transpired on the site between October 1, 1982 and December 20, 1982. These events made up the first conflict episode. The model can also be used to explain the second conflict episode: the events which transpired between the board's reaffirmation of its decision to close Bach School and the announcement by Allison that PINS had decided to drop its fight to keep Bach School open.

Frustration

The outcome of episode one, the board's reaffirmation of its decision to close Bach, served as the frustration event which triggered episode two. Once again, PINS members considered a number of action alternatives and their

probable success in preventing the closing of Bach.

Conceptualization

The conceptualization process used by constituent group members was influenced by the characteristics of the frustration event, the behavioral dispositions of members and their prior experiences, discussion among group members and members' perceptions of the board's responsiveness to their concerns. The conceptualization process was also impacted by the events of episode one. The board's unwillingness to delay the school closing, even though they had been presented with a number of petitions requesting them to do so, indicated that current board members could not be persuaded to change their minds unless the pressure to do so was increased.

Behaviors

Initially PINS considered two options: obtaining support from the EEA and petitioning for a referendum on the school closing issue. Later, recalling present board members and backing preferred candidates in the upcoming school board election were added as possible action alternatives. In spite of the alleged use of threats and promises, PINS was unsuccessful in obtaining EEA support for their position. The possibility of petitioning for a referendum was apparently never seriously considered, but recalling current board members was discussed as a possible option by PINS members both before and after the board reaffirmed its

decision to close Bach. Although the possibility of a recall campaign was used to threaten the board both in the newspaper and via the telephone, it was never attempted. Backing preferred candidates in the school board election did become a reality. In fact, PINS member, Matthison ran for the board and received the highest number of votes, defeating incumbent board president, Ferguson. After the EEA declined to become involved in the dispute, civil suits were filed by Martin on the behalf of PINS against both the Board of Education and Superintendent Richards.

Other's Reactions

Conceptualization. The conceptualization process used by members of the dominant coalition was also influenced by events from episode one. Having received the support of the citizen task force, board members felt more confident about their position and were not willing to compromise when PINS offered an out of court settlement.

Behaviors. Members of the dominant coalition reacted to PINS' actions. PINS' attempt to enlist the support of the EEA was watched with great interest but no effort was made to influence the outcome. The members of the board and the superintendent defended themselves vigorously against the lawsuits, however. Strategy meetings were held by the board president, the superintendent and the school attorney. Appropriate briefs were filed and testimony was given in court.

Other groups. Other constituent groups besides PINS were also involved in the conflict. The Executive Board of the EEA, an internal constituent group, rejected PINS' attempts to involve them in the conflict after consulting with their members. Members of Citizens Active for Responsible Education (CARE) did not play a visible role in the conflict but several of their members offered their assistance to one of the board members.

A third party who has the power to resolve the conflict may also be a part of the conflict process. In this case, the third party was the district court judge. He reacted by rejecting PINS' claims. A number of individuals in the community also reacted to the actions taken by PINS and by the dominant coalition. People wrote letters, spoke at board meetings and talked with members of the dominant coalition. While Thomas (1976) chose to restrict his process model to dyadic conflict, others besides the constituent group and the dominant coalition may play an important role in the conflict process and its final resolution. Thus, Thomas's model should be expanded to include additional "others" in order to reflect the conflict process more accurately (see Figure 22). Actions taken by members of the constituent group, PINS, influenced the reactions of the dominant coalition (A) and of others in the community (B). The reactions of the dominant coalition (A) influenced the reactions of other community members (B) and constituent

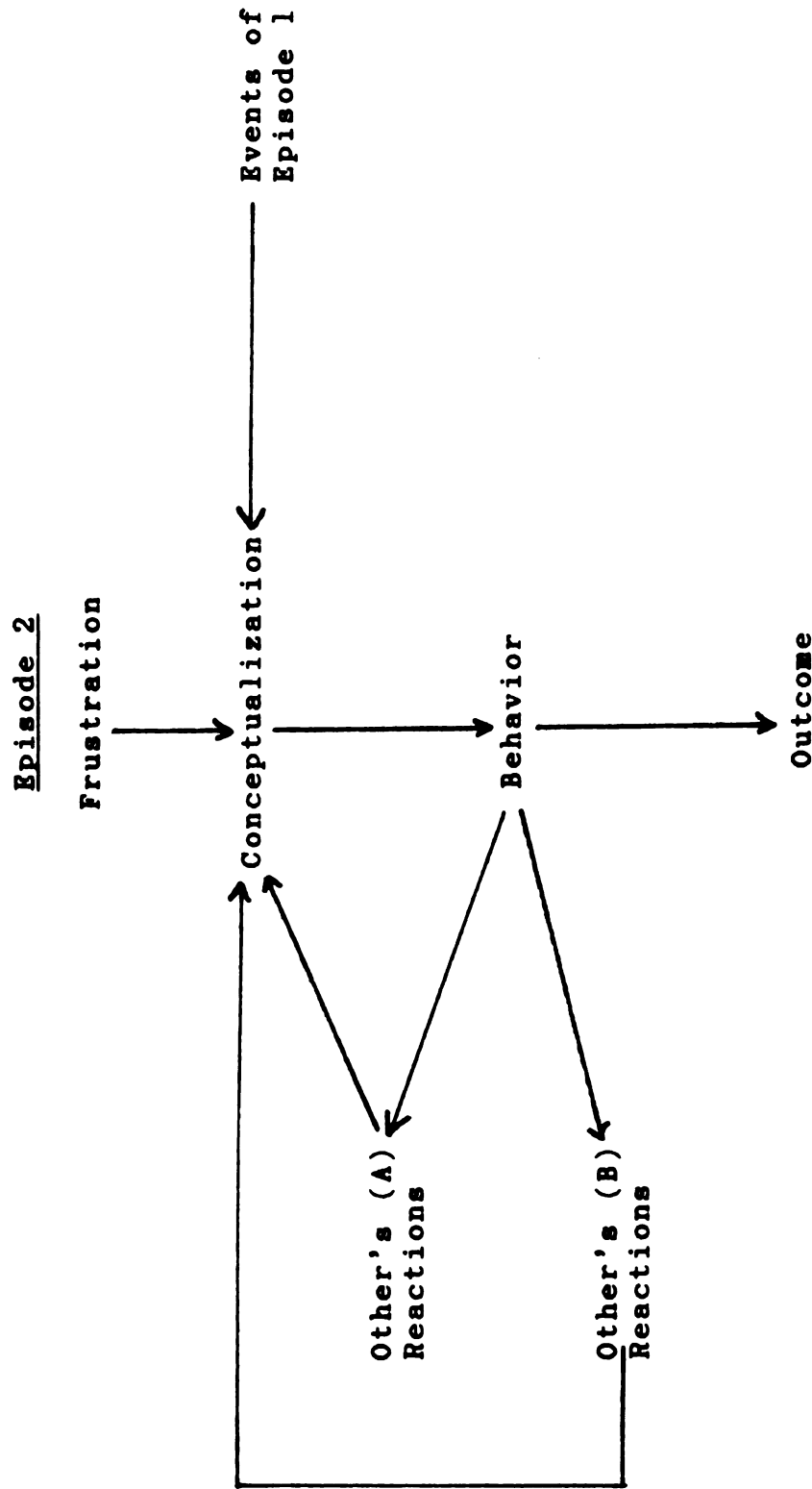


Figure 22

Expanded Conflict Model

Note. From "Conflict and Conflict Management" by K.W. Thomas, 1976, p.895, in M.D. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Company. Copyright c 1976 by Rand McNally College Publishing Company. Reprinted and adapted by permission of John Wiley and Sons.

members' conceptualization of the conflict. Reactions of other community members (B) impacted on the reactions of the dominant coalition members (A) and on the constituent members' conceptualization of the conflict. As noted earlier, the events of episode one impacted on the conceptualization process of each of the parties. This variable has also been added to the expanded version of the model.

Outcome

There were two outcomes of the second conflict episode. The first was the election of a PINS member to the board, accompanied by the defeat of the incumbent board president. The second was the court's judgement that the board had not erred in closing Bach School. Following this outcome, members of PINS gave up their fight to keep Bach School open. While PINS members were not successful in preventing the board from closing Bach they did get one of their members elected to the board which may have a greater impact in the long run than preventing the school closing would have had.

Management of Constituent Groups

Theoretical Perspectives

Constituent Groups

Pennings and Goodman

Constituencies, referents and organizational effectiveness. According to Pennings and Goodman (1977), organizations are open systems which accomodate a set of interest groups or constituencies. The organizational environment also is a set of interest groups or constituencies. The dominant coalition is a cross-section of constituencies with different and possibly competing expectations.

An organizational constituency is any group within an organization whose members have identifiable common interests that they try to promote. Group members share values and interests; they may be defined by department or hierarchical boundaries. Examples are subunits, employees, management and owners. Subsystems of the organization play a role, as constituencies, in defining the criteria used to determine organizational effectiveness (Connolly, Conlon and Deutsch, 1980; Pennings and Goodman, 1977; Wagner and Schneider, 1983; Zammuto, 1982). These constituencies have competing and potentially incompatible positions that are differentially accepted, sanctioned and represented by the

dominant coalition, which is the ultimate source for establishing criteria for organizational effectiveness. Consensus about the importance of the various criteria of effectiveness is a function of the power the various constituencies carry in the organization.

External constituencies are environmental interest groups that can influence the organization. They are characterized by substitutability, centrality and institutionality. Substitutability is the degree to which the resources provided by a particular group, such as a supplier or customer, can be replaced by another. The greater the substitutability the less dependent the focal organization is on the constituency. Centrality is the importance and degree of "connectivity" of the constituent actors to the focal organization (Hickson, et al, 1971). Institutionality is the level of organization or structuring of an actor. Constituents have little power unless they become organized. Institutionalization reinforces the effects of non-substitutability and centrality. The members of an external constituency must be aware of their influence on the focal organization if they are going to exploit their leverage. Examples of external constituencies are suppliers, buyers, and third parties such as regulatory agencies and professional associations.

Referents are standards of effectiveness which are determined by the dominant coalition. They are used in

evaluating constraints and goals. A constraint is a policy or decision rule that guides behavior. It is a condition that must be satisfied if the organization is to be considered effective. A goal is a desired end state specified by the dominant coalition. It receives more emphasis by the dominant coalition than does a constraint. Goals may or may not approximate a referent, but constraints must be satisfied as a necessary condition for organizational effectiveness. The degree of organizational effectiveness can be assessed by examining the degree to which a goal approximates or exceeds a referent. Referents may be internal or external. An internal standard is one that is unique to a given organization. An external standard is one that is based on information from other organizations (Hoy, Van Fleet and Yettley, 1984).

Role of constituencies. The establishment of constraints, goals and referents in the focal organization is a result of the interaction between constituencies or their representatives in the dominant coalition (Hoy, Van Fleet and Yetley, 1984). Since constituencies may have different preferences, conflict and bargaining are likely to occur. As a result of the bargaining which takes place among constituencies,

1. Attention is focused on a specific set of constraints, outcomes and referents. The constituency creates a degree of awareness by focusing attention on a

certain set of information. This awareness is a necessary condition for a particular referent to be adopted.

2. The dominant coalition is required to assess alternative combinations of constraints, goals and referents as they bear on the organization's ratio of inducements to contributions. The problem for the dominant coalition is to assess the consequences of adopting the set of constraints, goals and referents advocated by a constituency. The dominant coalition's basic decision rule is to maximize the inducement-contribution balance in favor of the organization. Thus, the cost of complying or not complying with a specific constraint is a crucial factor in determining whether or not the dominant coalition adopts a constraint preferred by a particular constituency.

Power

Salancik and Pfeffer

Source. Power accrues to those individuals or departments who can cope with critical, organizational problems (Bottger, 1984) and uncertainties (Cobb, 1984); that is, to those who control strategic contingencies (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1977). Those subunits that contribute to the critical resources of the organization will have influence in the organization. The source of power in organizations is the ability of a person to take or not to take actions that are desired by others. An individual's

power depends upon other people because they can determine the definition of what is a critical contingency for the organization and can undermine the uniqueness of the individual's personal contribution to the critical contingencies of the organization.

Impact on decision making. Since goals vary with different departments, decisions taken on behalf of the organization are likely to reflect the goals of those who have power in the organization. The conditions under which subunits will try to exert influence over decision making are,

1. When resources are scarce.
2. When they must obtain resources that are critical to their own survival and activities.
3. When there is uncertainty about what the organization should do and how to do it. If there are no clear cut criteria available for resolving a conflict of interest, a powerful manager can argue his case on any grounds and usually win it.

Management Strategies

Pfeffer and Salancik

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) have pointed out the importance of managing the demands of environmental groups especially those upon whom the organization depends for resources, such as labor unions, suppliers, financial

institutions and customers (Astley, 1983; Bazerman, 1983; Zammuto, 1984). One way of managing those environmental demands, they suggest, is to avoid their influence. Avoidance can be accomplished by:

1. Attending to conflicting demands of various groups sequentially, keeping commitments made to one group secret from the others,

2. Avoiding conditions which demand compliance with group demands, such as making one's actions difficult to observe and taking the stand that decision makers have no discretion because of legal or other constraints.

If avoidance is not possible, managers must adapt the organization to meet the demands of the environment and/or try to change the environment to meet the capability of the organization. Since the source of power of an interest group is its control over resources critical to the organization, managers should develop strategies for reducing resource dependence. As Thompson (1967) suggested, these strategies might include

1. Buffering inputs and outputs.

2. Controlling input and output exchanges via agreements.

3. Merging horizontally or vertically.

4. Diversifying inputs (for example, using substitutes) and/or outputs.

5. Diversifying into different businesses.

According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), strategies which might be used to avoid control by interest groups include

1. Eliminating the concentration of control by other organizations.

2. Using cooptation. That is, bringing members of threatening interest groups onto the board of the focal organization in order to socialize them to the needs of the organization.

3. Acquiring countervailing control through mergers or regulations by regulatory agencies.

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) developed a model for assessing external demands on an organization which includes the following steps.

1. Determine the interest groups.

2. Weight their importance.

3. Assess the criteria or values by which each group evaluates the organization.

4. Assess the effect of a given action on the criteria of each group.

In a study of organizational decision making in a university, Pfeffer and Salancik (1974) found that resource allocation decision making was a political process, which could be explained by considering the relative power of subunits as well as the use of rational criteria. The use of subunit political power in resource allocation decisions was constrained by external groups such as state legislatures

and unions.

Bridgeland and Thomas

The balancing of constituent demands in a school district has been described in a study of two school districts by Bridgeland and Thomas (1979).

The administrative leadership in public schools, including both appointed and elected officials, must satisfy a large number of different constituencies in the process of decision making. The "politics of education" is essentially a politics of compromise and balance in an often multi-conflict arena of policy formulation. How well leadership balances the constituent needs and/or demands may very well determine the relative effectiveness of a particular administrator or the administration in general and even the success of the total school system as well.

Coleman

The technique of cooptation was recommended by Coleman (1957) as a method for reducing dissatisfaction before it reached dangerous proportions. This was accomplished by bringing the opposition inside the organization to voice its criticism. Selznick (1949) defined two types of cooptation: formal and informal (Mills, Hall, Leidecker and Margulies, 1983). Formal cooptation occurs when the opposition is given the illusion that they have a voice in the organization, without actually giving it to them. This enables the organization to stifle the opposition without having to alter policy. If informal cooptation is used, the opposition has a real voice in policy without necessarily appearing to have one. Coleman (1957) and Pfeffer (1981) maintain that cooptation, regardless of the type used, is one important

means of breaking the cycle of polarization (the division of a community into two socially and attitudinally separate camps).

Weiner

In discussing the use of committees and task forces to resolve conflict, Weiner (1976) suggests that such groups should contain both allies and opponents. That is, managers should co-opt opponents into serving on committees and task forces because it contributes to the perception of community members that all sides have been heard and represented in the decision making process. This perception of fairness is necessary for the decisions to be considered legitimate and to be implemented.

Aldrich

How responsive the focal organization must be in relating to other organizations is a function of two factors: dependence and uncertainty (Aldrich, 1979). As can be seen in Figure 23, the focal organization's dependency on other organizations for its resources may be high or low. Similarly, the amount of uncertainty experienced by the focal organization because of equivocal information received from the environment concerning its relationships with other organizations may be high or low. An organization which is not dependent on other organizations for its resources and experiences low uncertainty has maximum freedom from external constraints. One which is highly

Dependency on Other Organizations for Resources			
		Low	High
Uncertainty because of equivocal information received from environment concerning relationships with other organizations	Low	maximum freedom from external constraints	must give into demands of others but they are predictable
	High	freedom to switch to other organizations	minimal freedom from environmental constraints & greatest degree of responsiveness required

Figure 23
Organizational Responsiveness

Note. From Organizations and Environments (p. 343) by H.E. Aldrich, 1979, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall. Copyright 1979 by Prentice-Hall. Reprinted by permission.

dependent on other organizations but whose relationships are certain, must give into the demands of others but the demands are predictable. Low dependency on other organizations combined with high uncertainty gives the focal organization freedom to switch to other organizations. Minimum freedom from environmental constraints is characteristic of organizations which experience high dependency and high uncertainty. The greatest degree of responsiveness is required of organizations in this category.

Pattern of Events

Constituent Groups

Both internal and external constituent groups were involved in the Bach School closing. The internal constituent groups were the central office administrators (the superintendent, assistant superintendent and business manager), and the Eureka Educational Association (EEA) Executive Board (officers in the local teachers' association). The members of each group shared common interests and values. The dominant coalition was made up of the seven, elected school board members and the superintendent whom they had hired. While the members of this group had different interests, they shared some common goals (Wagner and Schneider, 1983). Since the superintendent was a member of the dominant coalition and

since the EEA had no formal representation in the coalition, the preferences of the central office constituency were more likely to be accepted than were those of the EEA. As Pennings and Goodman (1977) point out, however, the consensus on the importance of various criteria of organizational effectiveness was a function of the power the two constituencies carried in the organization. Even though the EEA was not represented in the dominant coalition, their preferences had to be taken into account. The board's inability to change teacher qualifications without the concurrence of the EEA reflected that reality.

The external constituent groups were Parents In Neighborhood Schools group (PINS), the South Neighborhood Action Group (SNAG), the Downtown Business Association (DBA), the Chamber of Commerce, the Bach School Parent Teachers Association (PTA) and individual community members. PINS was formed by some disgruntled Bach parents who lived near Bach School. The group was alleged to have had 100 dues paying members at one time and included three groups of people: Bach parents who lived in the schools's neighborhood, Bach parents who did not live in the school's neighborhood, and nonparent residents. Those Bach parents who did not live in the neighborhood dropped out of the group first, followed by the neighborhood residents who did not have children in the school. Those who were still active in the group at the time of the trial were Bach parents who

lived near the school.

The members of SNAG supported PINS at one meeting by speaking in support of their concerns. Nothing more was heard from them. The DBA and the Chamber of Commerce chose not to get involved in the issue.

Members of the Bach PTA did not oppose the closing, as a PTA. This is surprising since in some communities where schools have been closed, the PTA has been instrumental in opposing the closing. One possible explanation for the lack of opposition from the PTA might be the relationship that existed between the PTA board members and the school principal. The PTA board and the principal worked closely together at Bach. The parents were very supportive of the principal and often expressed that feeling at board meetings and in letters to the editor. Since he supported the closing of the school, while at the same time acknowledging their feelings of sadness and disappointment, it would have been difficult for them to oppose the school board's action as members of the PTA board. Thus, the relationship between school officials and members of the community does have an effect on the conflict as noted by Coleman (1957).

Other members of the community reacted to the actions taken by PINS and the dominant coalition by writing letters, speaking at board meetings and talking to individual members of the coalition. No other organized group was formed, however.

While it is true that members of constituent groups share common interests, they do not always agree on the conceptualizations of a particular situation. Because of the hierarchy of authority which existed in the central office constituent group, members of the group appeared to accept the superintendent's conceptualizations. The structure of the REA, however, was a political one. Officers were elected by the members of the organization and there was a vying for influence among constituent subgroups within the REA organization. This was true, to an even greater extent, within the PINS constituent group. It was also made up of constituent subgroups: Bach parents, Bach residents and Bach parent residents. As PINS appeared less and less likely to achieve its goal, preventing the closing of Bach School, the constituent group became less cohesive and the various subgroups began to disappear.

Role of Constituencies

The board was dependent on the members of PINS as suppliers of a resource (property tax monies) to the degree that they were successful in persuading other tax payers to vote down millage proposals. There was no millage question on the ballot that year, but PINS was able to persuade a majority of the voters to elect one of their members in place of the incumbent board president. The constituent actors were important to the board because of their potential influence on other members of the community. Because they

were organized they had power in the situation. Thus, as Pennings and Goodman (1979) maintain, the constituent group was characterized by substitutability, centrality and institutionality. Members of the constituent group were aware of their influence and often threatened to use it against the board if board members did not agree to meet their demands.

Members of PINS missed an opportunity to gain support from the community at large and from the EEA when they did not oppose the board's administrative staffing plan. The EEA had criticized the board many times for laying off more teachers than administrators as enrollment declined. Many members of the community echoed this concern on various occasions. Yet, when the board failed to eliminate an administrative position, as it had promised to do when an elementary school was closed, members of PINS did not exploit the opportunity as board members had feared they would. In fact, Martin, PINS attorney, spoke in favor of the action.

In order to influence the dominant coalition, constituent groups not only need to be aware of their power, they also need to recognize opportunities for taking advantage of the weaknesses of the dominant coalition. This ability to recognize opportunities for exploiting others' vulnerabilities is a factor that needs to be added to constituency theory.

The board was subject to an external referent, adopting a balanced budget. State law prohibited boards of education from adopting deficit budgets. A balanced budget became a constraint that had to be satisfied for organizational effectiveness. When the board had difficulty meeting that referent for organizational effectiveness, it chose to obtain wage concessions from its employees and to close a school. While members of the affected constituent groups (the EEA and PINS) did not disagree with the referent, the necessity of balancing the budget, they did disagree with the board's assessment of the situation. The Michigan Educational Association sent a team to investigate the district's finances. The team concluded that the board did not have a financial problem serious enough to warrant wage concessions. Members of PINS also questioned the board's need to save the \$100,000 reduction in expenditures that would be made possible by closing a school.

Internal referents that were unique to the school district included curriculum standards. The dominant coalition's standard for organizational effectiveness as it related to curriculum was a broad curriculum that included art, music, physical education and extra curricular opportunities in addition to the basics of English, mathematics, social studies and science. Members of PINS were unwilling to give up their school so that the district could offer a broad curriculum to all the students. Those

members who lived in the Bach neighborhood favored a basic curriculum and saw less of a need for extra curricular opportunities. Bach parents who lived in expensive homes on the river did not want to give up the broad curriculum in order to keep Bach open, but they thought additional millage should be requested to solve the district's financial problems. Thus, there was a difference in goals between the dominant coalition and the most assertive members of PINS. The less assertive members shared the dominant coalition's goals of a broad curriculum, but disagreed with the means chosen to reach that goal, closing a school.

Bargaining took place between members of the dominant coalition and one of the internal constituent groups, the EEA, over the issue of wage concessions and teacher qualifications. Because the teachers were unionized, there was a process for handling conflict over the constraints, goals and referents adopted by the dominant coalition. That process was the negotiation and administration of the contract. The dominant coalition's goal of reducing personnel costs could not be realized because the contract forbade it and the EEA could not be persuaded to renegotiate the issue of wages during the life of the contract. When the board arbitrarily adopted a policy on teacher qualifications to meet its goal of improving teaching quality, the EEA used the grievance/arbitration procedure to prevent the board from taking such an action without its concurrence.

The board was eventually successful in negotiating teacher qualifications with the EEA as part of the next contract.

PINS attempted to bargain with the board over the closing of Bach School. After it was successful in getting one of its members elected to the school board, it offered to settle the lawsuits out of court if the board would agree to delay the closing of Bach one year. The board rejected the offer, believing that it could win in the courts. The board was not required to bargain with PINS. It was required by law to bargain wages, hours and conditions of employment with the EEA. The law and the court system are important variables which impact on the interaction between the dominant coalition and constituent groups.

It is true that the bargaining process focused attention on a specific set of constraints, referents and outcomes. The result of the constituency's focusing attention on a certain set of information, however, was the awareness that there was a discrepancy between one of the dominant coalition's referents and actual performance. Rather than creating a condition for a particular referent to be adopted, the information called attention to the fact that corrective action of some kind needed to be taken.

For example, the central office constituency presented the board members with information on declining enrollment that it had never received before. This focusing of attention on enrollment made board members aware that the

district was not being managed in an efficient way: that resources were not being used wisely because the district was operating more schools than it needed. Thus, the focusing of attention on certain information made it possible for the central office constituency to take a certain action that it desired, close a school.

The dominant coalition did assess alternative combinations of constraints, goals and referents as they impacted the organization's ratio of inducements and contributions. PINS attempted to persuade the dominant coalition to change one of its goals, close an elementary school, by focusing attention on certain information. The information presented, census figures, hospital births, use of relocatables and the sale of central office was rejected by board members because it did not fit their conceptualization of the situation. Members of the constituent group were unable to persuade the dominant coalition to adopt a different goal, neighborhood schools. Coalition members assessed the consequences of adopting that goal and decided that it would have a negative effect on the organization's ratio of inducements to contributions.

Power

The power of internal and external constituent groups was a function of their control over strategic contingencies. The EEA, because it controlled whether or not the teachers contributed to the organization, had

considerable power. The existence of labor laws which legitimized that control increased their power. The central office administrators also had power vis a vis the Board of Education. Since the administrators were responsible for implementing the board's policy decisions and for providing the board with necessary information, they too controlled contingencies critical to the organization. It is true the board had the power to fire the superintendent but community support for the administrators acted as a constraint on the use of that power.

PINS had power to the extent that it was able to persuade other members of the community to vote down millage proposals and/or to vote for specific board candidates. They discovered that their legal power to reverse the school board's decision was limited. The courts will not make a judgement on the appropriateness of the decision, only on the process used in making the decision.

The conditions under which subunits would be expected to try to exert influence over decision making were met in the school closing situation (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978). That is, resources were scarce, they were critical to the survival of Bach School and there was uncertainty, at least initially, about what the organization should do and how to do it. There were no clear cut criteria available for deciding which school to close and the superintendent, who was a powerful manager, was successful in arguing his case

in spite of a weak rationale.

Management Strategies

The dominant coalition employed a number of the strategies suggested by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) for avoiding the influence and control of constituent groups. Before the Open Meetings Act was passed in 1977, the school board was able to avoid the influence of constituent groups by attending to the conflicting demands of various employee and community groups sequentially, keeping commitments made to one group secret from others. After the Open Meetings Act was passed, however, the board had to consider the demands of constituent groups in public meetings and avoidance of their influence, as well as of the community at large, became more difficult.

Taking the stand that they had no discretion because of legal or other constraints was an avoidance technique used by members of the dominant coalition in defending the closing of Bach. Since state law prohibited school boards from adopting deficit budgets, and since they had exhausted other alternatives, board members maintained they had no choice but to close Bach.

Attempts were made by the board to reduce resource dependence as a way of reducing the power of particular constituencies. Negotiating labor contracts with employee groups, and diversifying into different businesses were examples of those attempts. A labor contract with an

employee group prevented that group from using arbitrary and/or unexpected behaviors such as not showing up for work on a particular day. Adding programs for preschoolers and adult students was a way of generating additional funds and of reducing the district's dependence on the enrollment of kindergarten through twelfth grade students.

Cooptation was used to avoid control by a constituent group. When it appeared to some board members that PINS was having some success in convincing community members of the "rightness of its cause", they persuaded the majority of the board members to establish a citizens task force including a representative of PINS. Because the representative would be only one person on a task force of seven, it was an example of formal cooptation as defined by Selznick (1949). That is, the opposition was given the illusion that they had a voice without its actually being given to them. The purpose of using formal cooptation is to stifle the opposition without having to alter policy. When the task force made its report, Allison initially agreed to work towards a smooth implementation of the report, even though he did not agree with all of the recommendations. Later, he repudiated the task force saying, "they didn't give a hoot for the facts". Thus, while the opposition might believe they have a voice initially, they may become disillusioned later and see the cooptation technique for what it really is, a method of stifling the opposition

without actually giving in to them.

Coleman (1957) suggests that cooptation is a useful way to break the cycle of polarization. Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) recommend bringing members of threatening groups onto the board of the focal organization to socialize them to the needs of the organization. This socialization process seemed to reduce the polarization initially as Allison was exposed to different points of view on the task force. Each time that he went back home after the meeting, however, he would be exposed to his wife's opinions and would return the next day convinced that PINS' position was the correct one. Eventually, he repudiated the task force, and reverted to his former public position of intransigence. It would appear that the success of cooptation in socializing people to see an issue from another perspective is influenced by other factors such as the personal characteristics of the individual and the nature of the other influences that person is being subjected to outside of the cooptation experience.

A different purpose may be served by coopting opponents to serve on committees and task forces. The inclusion of opponents on such groups contributes to the perception of community members that all sides have been heard and represented in the decision making process. This perception of fairness is necessary for decisions to be considered legitimate and to be implemented (Weiner, 1976). The primary

value attained by the school board in appointing the citizen task force and in including Allison was the fact that it satisfied the fairness criteria used by community members in deciding the legitimacy of the school closing decision and in evaluating the effectiveness of the dominant coalition in general.

How responsive the dominant coalition must be in relating to various constituent groups is a function of two factors: dependence and uncertainty (Aldrich, 1979). The school board was required to be responsive to two constituent groups: the EEA and PINS. It was required to be more responsive to the EEA than to PINS because it was more dependent on the former for critical resources which the EEA controlled (teachers) than it was on PINS who had less control over the other voters in the district. Thus, the board had to consult with the EEA regarding its desire to reduce personnel costs. It could act arbitrarily towards PINS, closing Bach School in spite of its opposition as long as it continued to meet the standard for organizational effectiveness subscribed to by the majority of the voting community.

As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) have pointed out, managing constituent groups is more than just avoiding their influence or control. It is (a) recognizing which groups are important because of their control over strategic contingencies (b) being aware of the referents used by the

various constituent groups in evaluating the organization's effectiveness and (c) balancing the demands of various groups so that the dominant coalition at least satisfies the standards of the most important group(s). In this school district, as in those studied by Bridgeland and Thomas (1976), the success of the administrative leadership (elected and appointed) depended upon how well they were able to balance the demands of internal and external constituent groups.

Crisis Syndrome Behavior

Theoretical Perspectives

Jick and Murray

According to Jick and Murray (1982), the way people respond to cutbacks in organizational activities is a function of the crisis-like properties of those cutbacks. Hermann (1969) has defined a crisis as a situation that threatens important goals (that is, severity) and which occurs suddenly with little response time available (that is, time pressure). If organization members perceive cutbacks as having these crisis-like qualities, their responses tend to follow a pattern of initial shock (numbed inaction) followed by defensive retreat (denial, refusal to change). These responses Jick and Murray (1982) have labelled the "crisis syndrome". In organizations the crisis

syndrome results in withdrawal, increased interorganizational conflict, reduction of communication channels, centralization and lowered performance standards (Hermann, 1963).

Kubler-Ross

The work of Kubler-Ross (1969) and Imara (1975) suggests that individuals experiencing a personal loss go through a number of stages before they accept that loss: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance. Denial of the loss event is usually temporary and serves as a buffer after receiving unexpected, shocking news. It allows the individual time to adjust to the loss and to mobilize other, less radical defenses. Once an individual admits that s/he has experienced, or will experience, a loss, denial is replaced by anger, rage, envy and resentment. There is a tendency to ask, "Why me? Why couldn't this have happened to someone else?" This anger is difficult for others to cope with since it is often displaced and projected onto the environment, almost at random.

The third stage, bargaining, is an attempt to postpone the loss by promising to do something in return. Terminally ill patients, for example, often promise God that they will live better lives if He will grant them a reprieve from their illness.

Depression is a necessary stage for individuals to go

through in order to reach the stage of acceptance. It is the sadness that accompanies the realization that loss has occurred or will occur. Acceptance of the loss is the final stage. The person is no longer angry or sad about the loss, but looking towards the future with expectations.

Crisis Event Responses

Those who opposed the closing of Bach School reacted as would be expected given the crisis-like properties of the event, severity and time pressure. That is, they first reacted by doing nothing (numbed inaction) and then fought to prevent the change from occurring (defensive retreat). (See Chapter Six for an earlier discussion of their reactions to the crisis.) Their behavior later on is not explained by Hermann's model, however. The behaviors they exhibited: denial, anger and refusal to accept change, followed by bargaining, depression and finally acceptance of the situation are characteristic of individuals experiencing a personal loss.

It would seem that groups of individuals who experience a loss, in this case the loss of their school, go through a grieving process similar to that experienced by an individual. The crisis behavior of persons affected by a school closing is more fully explained by the Kubler-Ross model than by Hermann's or Jick and Murray's theories.

Summary

Conflict Model

The conflict model, shown in Figure 21, was based on the writings of Coleman (1957), March and Simon (1958) and Thomas (1976) as modified by the events which transpired on the site between October 1, 1982 and December 20, 1982. The model can also be used to explain the events which transpired between the board's reaffirmation of its decision to close Bach School and the announcement by Allison that PINS had decided to drop its fight to keep Bach School open. Since the events which occurred in episode one had an impact on how the members of the constituent group and the members of the dominant coalition conceptualized the conflict and possible action alternatives, that variable should be added to the model.

During episode two, the EEA and the district court judge also took part in the conflict. The dyadic process model suggested by Thomas (1976) is inadequate for explaining the events of this episode. The model needs to be expanded to allow for interactions among additional groups and/or individuals, as shown in Figure 22.

Management of Constituent Groups

Internal and external constituent groups attempted to influence the constraints, goals and referents adopted by the dominant coalition. Their degree of success was a function of their power in the organization. The power which

accrued to the various constituent groups was a function of their control over strategic contingencies. In order to influence the dominant coalition, constituent groups not only needed to be aware of their power, they also needed to be able to recognize the vulnerabilities of other constituent groups and the dominant coalition and to be able to exploit those vulnerabilities.

The members of constituent groups shared common interests but they did not always agree on the conceptualization of a particular situation. Constituent subgroups existed within the constituency and they vied for influence over constituent goals, standards and referents in much the same way that constituent groups bargained within the organization. As a constituent group appeared less able to achieve its goal, it became less cohesive and members disappeared in the reverse order of their commitment.

The degree to which the dominant coalition was forced to bargain with constituent groups depended upon the power of the group. The ERA's power was increased by the labor legislation which required the dominant coalition to bargain with the union on wages, hours and conditions of work.

The result of the bargaining process was a focusing of attention on specific constraints, goals and referents. The attention focusing resulted in a realization that there was a discrepancy between a referent held by the dominant coalition and organizational performance. That awareness by

board members made it possible for the superintendent to achieve one of his goals, closing an elementary school. The dominant coalition may ignore the information brought to it by a constituent group if the information does not fit the conceptualization of the situation that members of the coalition have already adopted. Constituent groups will be unsuccessful in persuading the dominant coalition to adopt a particular goal, constraint or referent if the coalition members assess the cost of complying as being greater than the cost of not complying.

It is important to manage the demands of constituent groups, both external and internal, by avoiding their influence and control. Management techniques for accomplishing this include:

1. Attending to conflicting demands sequentially and secretly.
2. Avoiding conditions which demand compliance, such as taking the stand that decision makers have no discretion because of outside constraints.
3. Reducing the power of constituencies by reducing the organization's dependence on the resource they provide.
4. Coopting threatening interest groups into the organization in order to socialize them to the organization's needs and to give them an illusion of having a voice in the organization.

In public organizations, such as school districts,

attending to the conflicting demands of constituent groups secretly is very difficult because of the legislation which requires that meetings of the dominant coalition be open to the public. Because the school board and administration have limited control over the organizations's primary resources, teachers and students, it is difficult to reduce the power of constituent groups by reducing the organization's dependence on them.

Cooptation's chief value may be the effect of its use on the perception of community members that a decision was arrived at fairly. A standard of fairness appeared to be a referent used by community members in evaluating the performance of the school board and the superintendent. The degree to which cooptation is successful in socializing the opposition to the needs of the organization depends upon the personal characteristics of the member being coopted and the nature of the other influences to which the member is being subjected.

Managing constituent groups is more than just avoiding their influence or control. It is (a) recognizing which groups are important because of their control over strategic contingencies (b) being aware of the referents used by the various constituent groups in evaluating the organization's effectiveness and (c) balancing the demands of various groups so that the dominant coalition at least satisfies the standards of the most important group(s).

Crisis Syndrome Behavior

It would seem that groups of individuals who experience a loss, in this case the loss of their school, go through a grieving process similar to that experienced by an individual. The crisis behavior of persons affected by a school closing is more fully explained by the Kubler-Ross model than by Hermann's or Jick and Murray's theories.

CHAPTER NINE

SENSE MAKING

Theoretical Perspectives

Literature

Unit of Analysis

Up to this point, we have been looking at the group as the unit of analysis. That is, we have considered how the top management (the dominant coalition) of an organization manages the demands of external and internal constituent groups in a declining environment. We have also seen how constituent groups react to actions taken by the dominant coalition and to the actions of other constituent groups. Since group actions are the result of an interactive process which takes place among individual members of the group, it is necessary to understand the sense making process used by those individuals. That is, how do they identify, interpret and react to actions taken by others. As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and Silverman (1970) point out, it is individual actors who enact their own environments and who attach meaning to the behaviors of others. Therefore, we need to look at the individual unit of analysis in order to understand the behaviors of members of the dominant

coalition and of constituent groups.

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) often refer to the "organization's acting". For example, they discuss the attentional process by which "organizations select and ignore information". Yet, they recognize that, more precisely, it is

the individuals who enact it (the environment) in planning the activities of the organization....If environments are enacted, that is "created", as suggested by Weick, then there are as many environments as there are enactors. This would explain why individuals in different or even the same organization may react differently to what appears to be the same context (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978, p. 73).

Silverman (1970) addresses the problem of reification (treating an abstraction as though it were an object) more directly when he states, "If one talks in terms of organizations behaving, however, one runs the risk of attributing human characteristics to social constructs" (Silverman, 1970, p. 29). He suggests that one can gain more insight by analyzing organizations from an "immanent" point of view. That is, since the relationships between an organization and its environment depend upon the meanings which individuals attach to the behavior of others, we need to focus on those meanings of individuals.

Environmental Influences on Organizational Members

In discussing the influence of environments on organizations, Pfeffer and Salancik (1978, p. 63) have suggested there are three levels of environments:

1. "The entire system of interconnected individuals and

organizations who are related to one another and to a focal organization through the organization's transactions."

2. "The set of individuals and organizations with whom the organization directly interacts."

3. "The level of the organization's perception and representation of the environment - its enacted environment."

Events occurring in the first two levels can affect organizational outcomes, whether they are noticed by organizational members or not. For example, if declining enrollment is not noticed by organizational decision makers, they might not be aware of empty classrooms and the opportunity to close a school in order to conserve resources. As Pfeffer and Salancik have noted, "Something not attended to by the organization cannot affect its actions, even though it may subsequently affect its outcomes" (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978, p. 73). Nevertheless, the funneling of scarce funds into the maintenance of unneeded facilities reduces the money available for other programming. Thus, declining enrollment can have an impact on school programming even if no one notices that is is occurring.

The third level, the "enactment" level is the level that affects actions taken by organizational members. Since an organization's environment is enacted by attentional processes, we need to look at the decision process by which

its members select and ignore information.

Factors Affecting Attentional Process

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) stress that people are social actors whose behavior is affected by what they observe, pay attention to and perceive.

For an external observer predicting the behavior of the organization, the prediction and explanation of organizational behavior will be enhanced if the attentional process, as well as the objective setting, is included in the framework (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978, p. 73).

Thus, it is important to know what factors influence this process.

Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) suggest that the structure of the organization, the structure of the information system in the organization and the activities of the organization determine the enacted environments of individuals; that is, what part of the flow of information from the environment is noticed and attended to by individuals.

The information system is made up of the reports, statistics and other data that are collected on a regular basis, the transformation of these data into meaningful information, and the pattern of information transmission throughout the organization. Information that is transmitted regularly focuses attention on itself by its very existence and prominence. It also affects individual behaviors since what gets reported on or measured is a clue to organizational members of what is important.

Therefore, it is important to know what factors lead

organizations to collect information on certain aspects of their environment. Ease of obtaining and processing the information is a factor. Thus, one would expect to see information that is quantifiable and easily measurable. Another factor is the relevance of the information to problems and operations of the organization. If the activity being monitored is critical to the organization and if there is uncertainty with respect to that activity, then information about that activity has high relevance.

The structure of the organization is another critical factor in the collection of information. A subunit, concerned with its own survival and power in an organization, collects information which enhances its own value in organizational decision making. It also tends to focus organizational attention on those activities with which it is concerned.

Organizational members learn what portions of the environment to attend to through past experience. When new sectors of the environment demand certain performances by the organization, then organizations learn to attend to those. How much attention is paid to them depends upon the group's control over resources needed by the organization.

Interpreting the Environment

How people make sense out of equivocal information they receive from the environment has been explained by Weick (1979). A person notices (brackets) certain segments of the

equivocal information being received from the environment. The individual tries to make sense out of that segment by applying "causal maps" to the information. Those causal maps may come from a person's memory or from some other source, such as conversations with another individual. Once a segment has been interpreted it is retained or stored for possible future use in making sense out of other equivocal information. Weick refers to these steps in sense making as enactment, selection and retention. When individuals use stored interpretations from their memory to explain a current incident, they are "crediting" retention. This activity increases stability since the past is continued. If individuals reject stored interpretations and look for new ways to explain events, then they are discrediting retention. This type of activity increases flexibility since new explanations are being sought. If all of the equivocality cannot be reduced by individuals as a result of the enacting, selecting and retaining process, then they will attempt to negotiate consensus with other individuals on the equivocality that remains. Sense making is a retrospective process since one is trying to explain an event that has already occurred.

Weick (1979) suggested that it was possible to "tap" the sense making process used by individuals through a technique known as "causal mapping". People are asked to describe the cause(s) and consequences of particular events.

Their responses are drawn as causal loops. Relationships between variables in the loops may be either positive or negative. If the relationship is positive, then the variables change in the same direction. If it is negative, then a change in one is accompanied by a change in the opposite direction in the other. There are two types of causal loops, deviation amplifying and deviation counteracting.

Deviation amplifying loops are those which have an even number of negative signs and are unstable, (see Figure 24). Once events begin to go in a particular direction, they will continue in that direction until the system is destroyed or until some outside event that is strong enough to reverse that direction takes place. The example in Figure 24 depicts the prediction made by a school board candidate of what would happen if the board decided to solve the budget deficit by using "one-mill monies" for general operating expenses. According to the candidate, the voters would perceive the board as having no credibility and would turn down the millage. The millage failure would reduce the school's revenues even further and thus the decision to use the "one-mill monies" would intensify the deficit budget problem, rather than solve it. A deviation amplifying loop is a vicious circle, a situation that keeps getting worse and worse.

Deviation counteracting loops are those which have an

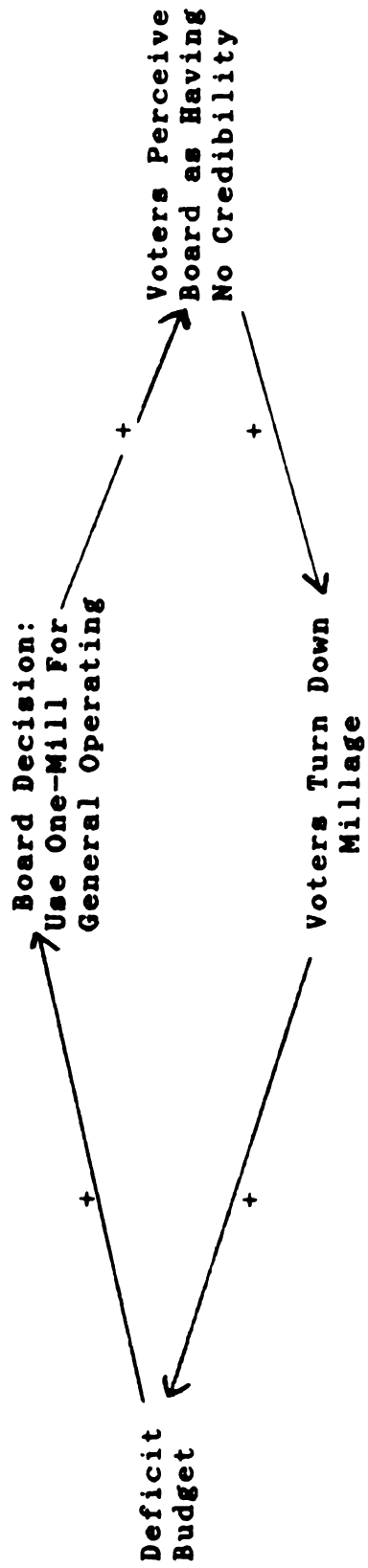


Figure 24

Deviation Amplifying Loops

odd number of negative signs and are stable or self-regulating (see Figure 25). Deviations are automatically corrected by the system when there are an odd number of negative signs. The example in Figure 25 is deviation counteracting in that increasing budget deficits are counteracted or reduced by the early retirement plan decision which reduces employee costs.

While we often think of independent and dependent variables, according to Weick (1979), we ought to realize that interdependence is characteristic of most organizations. Most causation is circular, not linear. If people do not see these causal loops, it is because they have not been around long enough to see the "effects" come back to influence the "causes".

Integrated Model

A model which reflects the writings of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and Weick (1979) appears in Figure 26. The enacted environment, that is, the information from the environment that an individual pays attention to (brackets) is influenced by a number of factors. Those factors are the structure of the organization, the structure of the information system, the activities of organizational members, stored interpretations of past experience (retention) and the demands of constituent groups. The enacted environment is interpreted (selected) by an

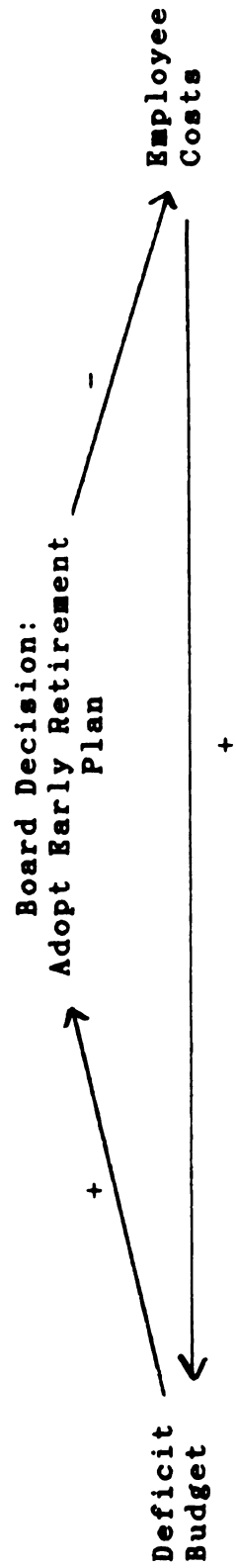


Figure 25

Deviation Counter-Acting Loops

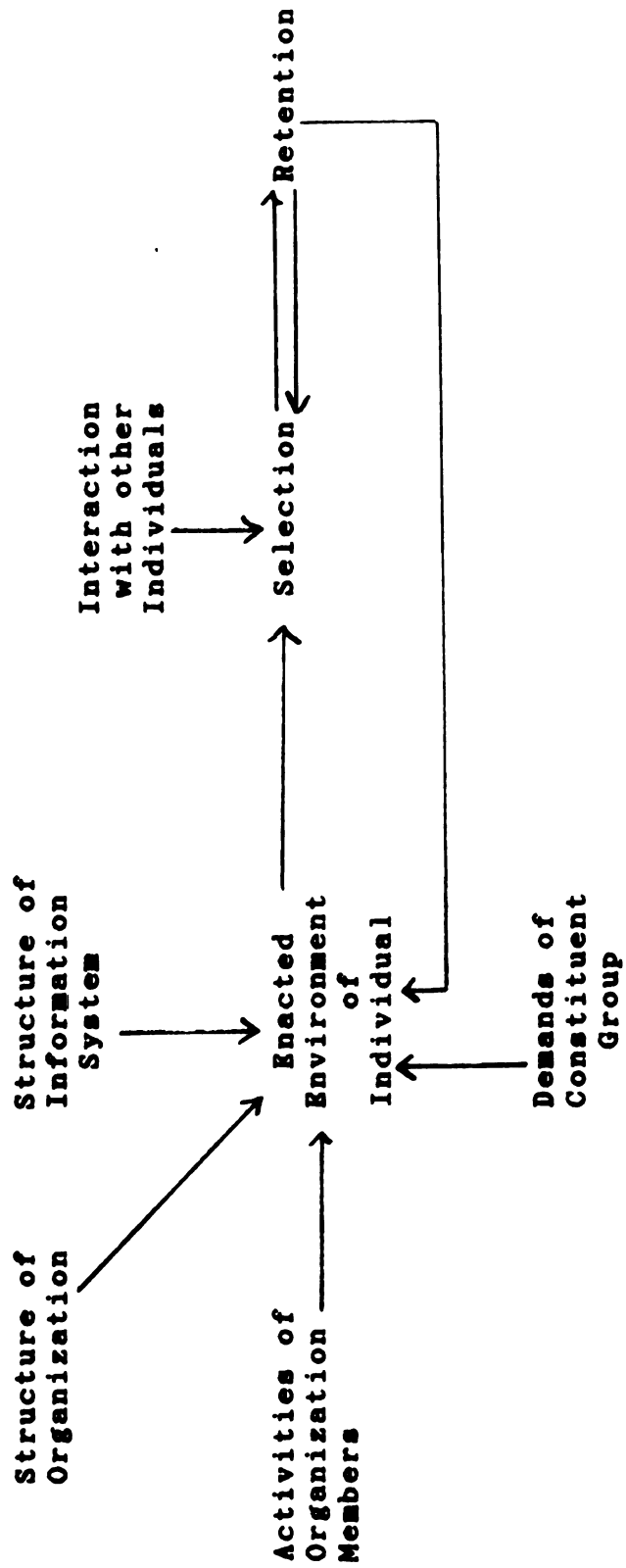


Figure 26
Integrated Model

individual who uses causal maps to make sense out of a particular segment of information. The causal maps may come from a person's memory or from conversations with another individual. An interpreted segment is stored (retained) for possible future use in making sense out of equivocal information. Retained segments influence future bracketing of equivocal information as well as its interpretation.

Sense Making Situations

Data

In this study, there are a number of situations where we are interested in how people make sense out of the equivocal information they are receiving from the environment. Those situations include the following:

1. Dominant coalition members' perception and interpretation of environmental decline and of their decision responses to that decline.

2. Constituent and/or coalitional group members' perception and interpretation of dominant coalition responses to decline and of actions taken by other constituent and/or coalitional groups.

As suggested by Weick (1979), the causal mapping technique was used to tap the sense making process used by members of the dominant coalition and two constituent groups: central administrators and the executive board of

the teachers' union. Seven Board of Education members, three central office administrators and four union board members were interviewed in the spring of 1982. The fourteen interviewees were asked to describe the causes and results of each of ten board decisions. The decisions which the board made in an attempt to balance the annual operating budgets of 1980-81 and 1981-82, are the focus of this chapter and are shown in Table 7. The interview data was used to draw 140 causal maps representing what each interviewee reported as the causes and results of each of the ten decisions. The causal maps reported by each board member in relation to one board decision, the adoption of an early retirement plan, for example, are shown in Figures A1-A7 in the Appendix. Interviewees volunteered their own judgements based on their own stated criteria; these judgements are included in the causal maps.

Since it would be unwieldy to reproduce all 140 of the causal maps, group causal maps were drawn for each decision based on the individual causal maps of the persons in a particular group. Figures A 8 through A 17 depict the group causal maps for each board decision as reported by board members. That is, the causes, effects and evaluations of each decision (using stated criteria) as mentioned by a majority of the individual board members are summarized and represented by one group causal map. Similarly, Figures A 18 through A 27 show the group causal maps for central office

Table 7

Budget Balancing Decisions Made by Board of Education

Adopt early retirement plan.

Use paraprofessionals in elementary school libraries instead of librarian.

Eliminate four administrator positions.

Use one-half of one mill monies for operating expenses.

Increase building rental fees.

Eliminate 14 teachers at the high school by shortening the school day.

Reorganize the bus routes, requiring students to walk further.

Accept IOU from Booster Club for sports.

Cutback on art, music and physical education in elementary schools.

Ask staff to reduce personnel costs by taking fewer personal days or some other benefit reduction.

Note. From Board of Education Minutes, August 19, 1980 and July 20, 1981.

administrators, and Figures A 28 through A 37 the group causal maps for union executive board members.

The cause, effects and evaluation of each decision have been summarized, by group, to expedite comparison across and within groups (see Table 8 for comments by members of the Board of Education, Table 9 for comments by central office administrators and Table 10 for comments by members of the union's executive board).

Glaser and Strauss' (1967) comparative analysis technique was used to compare the causal loops within and across groups. As indicated in Chapter 1, the comparative analysis technique requires the researcher to sample various comparison groups (individuals or aggregates of individuals) in such a way that a complete description of the important categories (variables) and their relationships to each other results. The sampling does not need to be random since the focus is on the direction of hypothesized relationships, not on their strength.

Glaser and Strauss describe four stages in their "constant comparative method of qualitative analysis".

1. Code incidents observed by comparing them with other incidents in the same category and with those incidents in different categories. Write a memo on any theoretical ideas that occur during the process.

2. Integrate categories and their properties. This integration will emerge from the data if the researcher has

Table 8
Board Members' Responses

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Early Retirement Plan	Desire to avoid laying-off young (good) teachers Need to save \$	Number of teachers laid-off reduced	Good: avoided some lay-offs of good staff Saved money: yes, no maybe
Para-professional Librarians	Need to save money	No negative effects on services	Good
Eliminate Four Admin-istrative Positions	Need to save \$ Union Pressure community pressure too many administrators	Community appealed saved money	Good: no negative effect on administrative services
Use of "one-mill \$"	Avoid further costs	Negative effect on board credibility with possible negative effect on future millage elections	Poor: improper use of money
Increased Building Rental Fees	Fees too low in past	Not sure	Good: no complaints

Table 8 (cont'd.)

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Shorten High School Day	Need to save \$	Negative effects on School Programming	Necessary, but didn't want to do it
Reorganize Bus Routes	Need to save \$ Need to improve system	Reduced costs system improved Most community pleased Some parents unhappy with change in service	Good: system improved most people pleased
Accept IOU for Sports	Board cuts in Sports Community Pressure: save sports	Saved sports	(5) Good, if raise money (1) Good, even if don't raise \$ (1) Poor, decision- making process improper, might not raise the money Board not enough control over process
Cuts in Elem. Art, Music, P.E.	Need to Save Money	Programs suffered because not enough time for them	Necessary, but didn't want to do it

Table 8 (cont'd.)

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>
Ask staff for Concessions	Desire to reduce costs without cutting programs Union "should" give concessions	Union Refused

Table 9
Central Office Administrators' Responses

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Early Retirement Plan	Desire to avoid lay-offs of younger staff	Reduced number of layoffs	Effective way to bring about changes in personnel (i.e., keep younger staff)
Para-professional Librarians	Need to save money Need to improve service	Reduced Costs Improved Service	Worked well: Saved money and improved service
Eliminate Four Administrative Positions	Union & Community Pressure Need to save money	Working satisfactorily	Satisfactory
Used "one-mill-\$"	Needed to balance budget	Community unhappy Did balance budget	Don't do it future because community believes it was mis-use of funds
Increase Building Rental Fees	Fees were too low	Increased income to district	Good
Shorten High School Day	Need to save money	Saved money Hurt Programs	Not, good but necessary

Table 9 (cont'd.)

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Reorganize Bus Routes	Need to save money Citizen Task Force Recommended it	Saved significant money	Good
Accept IOU for sports	Need to save money	Saved sports	Not good: constraint on administrative decision making
Cuts in Elem. Art, Music & P.E.	Need to save money	Reduced costs	Least detrimental of cuts that could have been made-- saved the classroom curriculum
Ask staff for Concessions	Need to save money	Union rejected	Appropriate request

Table 10
Union Executive Board Members' Responses

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Early Retirement Plan	Need to lay-off teachers Desire to keep younger teachers	Reduced number of lay-offs	Good idea, Encouraged those planning to retire to do so avoided lay-offs
Para-professional Librarians	Need to save money	Union filed grievance	Poor: subcontracting. Board should have discussed with union instead of deciding arbitrarily
Elimination of Four Administrative Positions	Need to save money Union pressure	Better teacher/administrator ratio	Good: better teacher/administrator ratio
Use of "one-mill-\$"	Need to save money	Some community people unhappy	Good idea under current financial circumstances
Increase in Building Rental Fees	Need to save money	Mixed	All right in difficult financial circumstances

Table 10 (cont'd.)

<u>Decision</u>	<u>Cause(s)</u>	<u>Results</u>	<u>Evaluation</u>
Shorten High School Day	Need to save money	Reduced student opportunities	Negative effects on student programming
Reorganization of Bus Routes	Need to save money	Saved money improved system	Good: new system is more efficient
Accept IOU for sports	Community pressure	Increased opportunities for children	Good because more opportunities for students, but concerned about inappropriate citizen influence on decision making & sports getting more support than fine arts & academics
Cuts in Elem. Art, Music & P.E.	Need to save money	Students hurt where programs reduced	Poor: fewer student opportunities
Asking staff for concessions	Recommended by administration	Detrimental to staff moral	Poor: unfair to teachers

simultaneously collected, coded and analyzed the data.

3. Delimit the theory. As the theory emerges and solidifies, fewer categories will be relevant than first thought.

4. Write the theory by collating the memos one has written on each category and returning to the coded data only when necessary.

The results of that analysis follow.

Analysis

Dominant Coalition Members

Enacted environment. As suggested by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), the structure of the organization and its information system as well as the activities of organizational members influenced the enacted environment, that is what information members of the dominant coalition noticed (bracketed). The coalition's source of information was the superintendent who acted as a gatekeeper for the Board of Education. Relevant information was either collected at his request or sent to him as the administrative head of the organization.

The relevancy of the information was determined by the problems and operations of the organization as well as the degree of uncertainty surrounding critical activities (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). Budgeting, for example, was an important operation. State law required the board to adopt a

balanced budget for the coming fiscal year. It had to be amended during the year as changes in revenues or expenditures became necessary. As we have seen, anticipated budget deficits were a problem for the board during the years of the study. Therefore, it is not surprising that information relating to the budget, such as, the state's financial condition, the political climate in the state capital, anticipated revenues from local millages, projected costs of school programming, forecasted K-12 enrollment figures and opportunities for expanded and/or new programming for non K-12 segments of the population was sought by the superintendent and shared with the board. As uncertainty regarding these critical activities increased, so did the relevancy of information about them. Prior to December 1981, for example, the board did not receive student enrollment projections. When enrollment decreased 8% in 1981-82, the highest percent decrease in the history of the school district, however, the superintendent started compiling detailed enrollment figures and projections. Information needed by board members in making decisions was provided by the superintendent. Thus, budget related information was sent to them along with a recommended budget.

In addition to collecting and disseminating information, the superintendent gave the board his interpretation of events. He made sense out of equivocal

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information he received on the state's financial condition or the political climate in the state capital by using causal maps from his memory or from some other source such as conversations with a state legislator or a lobbyist from the Michigan Association of School Boards.

Interpreted environment. The board members' interpretation of decline and of their decision responses to that decline is discussed in the following section.

Decline. Board members' views on decline were obtained indirectly by asking them:

1. Do you think we need long range or short range solutions to the problems of declining enrollment and income?

2. Have you any other thoughts about how we ought to respond to changes in income or enrollment?

Four of the seven board members reported that long range solutions were needed since the problems were long term problems.

Problems of decline are long range.

These problems are not going to go away.

The state is not coming back right away; the population will decrease faster; we are losing our young people.
(Interviews of School Board Members, February 21 - March 22, 1982).

The remaining three members indicated that both long and short range solutions were needed.

We need a certain amount of long range planning but we need to make changes as necessary - things change so rapidly.

I like long range solutions but they have to be timely - we can't put off the necessary planning. Therefore, we need some short range solutions to plug the holes, sometimes (Interviews of School Board Members, February 21, 1982 - March 22, 1982).

In response to the second question, "have you other thoughts about how we ought to respond?", several board members suggested that we needed to think of other ways of doing things, such as, using more volunteers in the school, and changing the length of the school week and/or year. While several board members stated that the financial and enrollment problems were not going to go away right away, one board member was more optimistic.

I'm optimistic about the economy turning upward and more businesses coming into town. The "baby boom" parents may have children, increasing enrollments. (Interview of School Board Members, February 21, 1982-March 22, 1982).

It is interesting that while board members thought there was a need to think of other ways to do things, such as using more volunteers in the school, no novel suggestions or decline responses were proposed at board meetings. The responses followed the same pattern they had for years; that is, ask the voters to increase local property taxes and, if that does not work, reduce costs by cutting programs. As predicted by March and Simon (1958), their search for alternatives was problematic. That is they looked for solutions close to the problem, raising taxes or cutting costs, rather than devising innovative solutions.

The decline literature suggests that managers perceive

decline as resulting from poor management and therefore are reluctant to acknowledge its existence (Whetten, 1980). Board members, with one exception, however, did not deny the existence of decline. They not only acknowledged that the organization was experiencing it, but indicated they believed it was a long term problem that was not going to go away in the near future. This may have been because board members perceived the cause of decline to be inadequate funds, something over which they believed they had no control.

Causes of decisions, as reported by board members. The causes of nine of the ten decisions were related to the problem of inadequate funds. The tenth, building rental fee increases, was perceived as being "long overdue". It was something which needed to be done, regardless of whether or not the budget was a problem. While nine of the ten decisions were perceived as responses to declining resources, board members hoped to accomplish other objectives by making these decisions, as well. The early retirement plan, for example, not only saved the district money, it prevented the loss of six younger staff members. As older members of the staff retired, fewer people had to be laid off when the number of teaching positions was reduced. Since some of the older staff were thought to be less productive than those being laid off, it was hoped that the less productive teachers would be the ones to choose

early retirement (Interview of School Board Member, March 8, 1982).

Eliminating four administrative positions was another vehicle for releasing poor performers, in this case, administrators (Interview of School Board Member, April 12, 1982). Reorganizing the transportation system not only saved money, it resulted in a more efficient system, as well. Community and union pressure also contributed to some of the board decisions, especially the decisions to eliminate four administrators and to allow citizens to raise funds for previously eliminated athletic programs.

Results. In nine of the ten decisions, the board thought it had achieved what it had intended. The decision that did not achieve the desired result was the board's attempt to procure staff wage concessions. All of the unions rejected this proposal.

Evaluation. Without being asked to do so, most board members volunteered their evaluation of the various decisions that had been made in response to decline. In discussing those evaluations they usually indicated the criteria or standard against which they had compared the decision. For example, the early retirement plan was "good" because it had allowed the board to avoid laying off some young (and good) staff members. The substitution of seven paraprofessionals for one librarian and the elimination of four administrative positions were both rated as "good"

because neither action had had a negative effect on service in their view. Actually the paraprofessional decision resulted in the teachers' union filing a grievance. To prevent the issue from going to arbitration, the board agreed not to subcontract in the future. This agreement acted as a constraint on future board attempts to find less expensive ways to provide services. For example, the use of a bus driver, who happened to have reading instruction skills in a Title One reading program, was stopped by the board when the union filed a grievance, even though it meant some children who needed help would not get it, and the bus driver who had some time between bus runs would not be utilized (Grievance A 83-84 #11).

None of the board members mentioned this agreement as a consequence of the paraprofessional decision, and no one saw the problems such a constraint on board flexibility could cause in future responses to decline. As Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) have indicated, events which are not part of the enacted environment can affect organizational outcomes even though they do not affect organizational behaviors.

The board's use of the "one-mill monies" for general operating funds was criticized by some segments of the community, as noted earlier. In retrospect, board members decided that was a poor decision because it had had a negative effect on the board's credibility, and they decided that they would not make that decision again. This was born

out in the summer of 1982 when they refused to use any "one-mill monies" to balance the 1982-83 budget (Board of Education Minutes, August 16, 1982).

Increasing building rental fees was "good", even though board members were unsure of the results of the decision, because they had thought it was a good idea to begin with (previous fees had not covered costs), and they had not received any complaints about the new fees.

Program cuts, such as shortening the high school day and reducing art, music and physical education opportunities in the elementary school were viewed as unfortunate but necessary, given the districts's financial situation. One board member thought that cutting elementary programs was a poor decision. In his view, the cuts were made because "the administration picked low visibility cuts rather than face up to the real problems". Cuts were made at the high school, according to him, because the administrators wanted to shorten their work day.

The reorganization of bus routes was "good" because the system was improved, significant amounts of money were saved, and the majority of the community was pleased that the system was more efficient. Some parents did come to the board meeting to express their concern about the safety of the new transportation arrangements.

The most controversial decision was that of accepting a pledge from 200 local citizens to raise sufficient funds

(\$18,000) to pay for the reinstatement of previously cut athletic programs. Different community members had argued for and against the proposal at the board meeting. It passed by a 6:1 vote (Morning News, October 2, 1980). In retrospect, the majority of the board thought it was a good decision because it offered needed programming to students, and because not to have accepted the help would have alienated an important segment of the voting public. One board member thought it was a good decision "even if we have to eat the \$18,000" because it "bought the board time" to make more appropriate decisions. He defined "appropriate" decisions as cutting sports with low participation, rather than making those cuts that "generated the least amount of heat" (Interview of school board member, February 24, 1982).

Criteria. The criteria used by the board in evaluating their responses to decline were:

1. Effect on delivery of services.
2. Effect on board credibility.
3. Availability of other alternatives.
4. Effect on budget.
5. Effect on program opportunities for students.
6. Community reaction.

Community reaction was the most difficult to assess because the community did not often react as a single group to board actions. Supporters of sports programming wanted it reinstated while others saw this as unfair since eliminated

programs in fine arts and academic opportunities were not being restored. Many citizens were pleased that less money was being spent on the bus system, but others were concerned and angry because they thought that the safety of their children was being endangered by the changes (September 6, 1981).

Determining what various constituent groups wanted was made more difficult by the tendency of people to communicate their demands only if they thought those demands were not being satisfied. In addition to determining what constituent groups wanted, board members also had to assess the power of those groups vis a vis the board. Board members did not always know or agree on the power situation.

Action. After using the criteria to make a judgement regarding an issue, board members voted for or against it. If there was disagreement prior to the vote, board members discussed their interpretations of the issue. Each discussant pointed out the anticipated results of a particular decision and made a judgement regarding those outcomes, using some criterion or standard. For example, in discussing the issue of staff concessions at a board Personnel Committee meeting on September 5, Ferguson argued that the board should "publicly hang them out to dry" if the teachers' union refused to negotiate concessions. By emphasizing the union's non-cooperation, and the negative effect that would have on programming opportunities for

students, the board would be able to stir up feelings of resentment in the community against the teachers. The community, being angry with the teachers, would pressure them to "settle for less" at the bargaining table when the contract expired in several months. This would result in a less expensive contract with the teachers and would help the district's budget deficit. Therefore, the board should follow his advice. His argument is represented by the causal map depicted in Figure 27.

Smith responded that if the board "publicly hung the teachers out to dry" that the community would get mad at the teachers, but that they would "punish the teachers" by voting down the millage, reasoning there would be less money available for salary increases. If the millage were voted down, the budget deficit would be worse than it was before, therefore, the board should reject Ferguson's advice. Smith's argument is represented by the causal map in Figure 28.

A third board member, Kirby, expressed still another position. If the board "publicly hung the teachers out to dry", then the teachers would get mad, ruining a good working relationship that "we have built up since the new superintendent came". Therefore, we should not follow Ferguson's advice. His argument is depicted in the causal map shown in Figure 29.

Board members, of course, may vote on the same side of

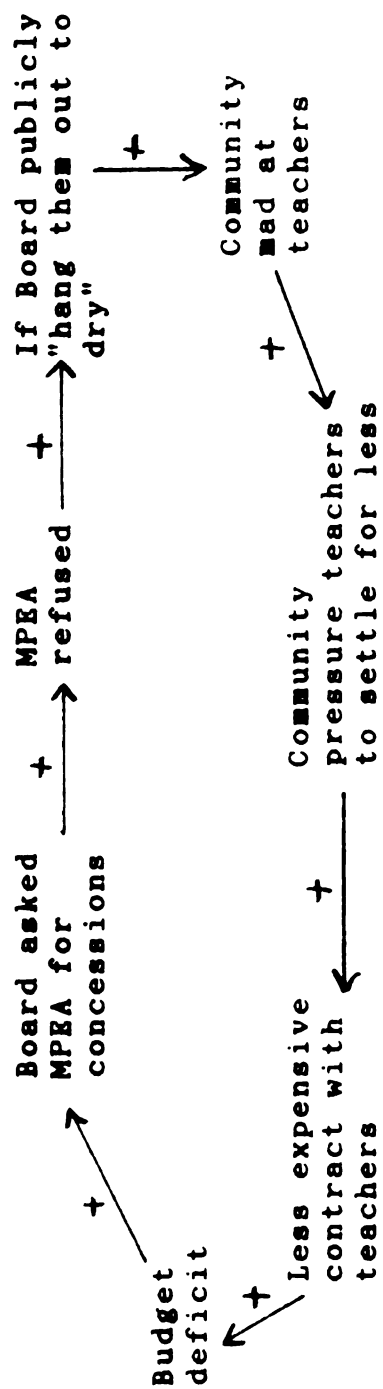


Figure 27

Wage Concession Refusal: Ferguson

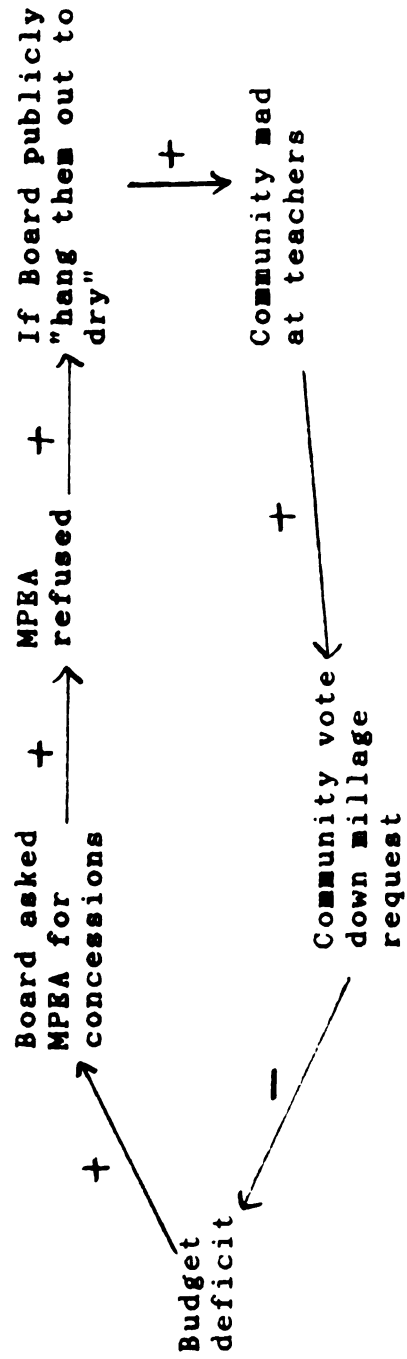


Figure 28

Wage Concession Refusal: Smith

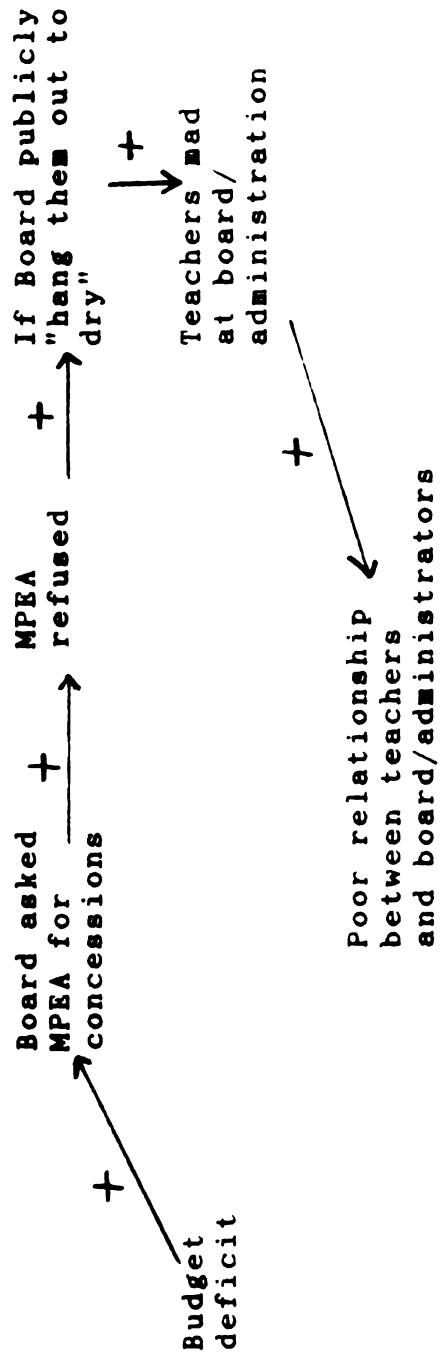


Figure 29

Wage Concession Refusal: Kirby

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an issue for different reasons. As Weick (1979) suggested, people may converge on means without ever converging on goals. In this case, Kirby and Smith voted against Ferguson's proposal for different reasons. After an issue was voted upon, board members supported the board's decision, at least publicly, even if they had voted against it.

Constituent Groups

Central Office Administrators

Central office administrators were a constituent group in that they shared common interests, such as the belief that professionals, not citizens should administer the school district. Their opinions concerning board actions were important to the board since they had control over two critical contingencies.

1. They controlled information needed by the board in order to make decisions.

2. They controlled the administration of the district, that is, the implementation of policies adopted by the board.

Decline. Administrators' perspectives on decline are reflected in the following comments:

This may be a short range problem. The birth rates will start to increase in 1985. It's declining enrollment that really hurts. If we are way off in our projections, it really hurts us in budgeting.

We need both long and short range solutions.

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Expedient solutions (that is, ones without much rationale) don't hold up very long anymore.

We need a combination of short and long range solutions. In the short range, we have to do some real juggling because of the money situation. In the long range we need to do a better job of meeting the curriculum needs of our students. (Interview of Central Office Administrators, March 31, 1982).

Their general thoughts on the organization's responses to decline were as follows:

The last couple of years it's been a nightmare because of declining enrollments. It's hard to make projections. If the projections are wrong, it really hurts in budgeting. You have to analyze everything you can.

We are a reactionary institution. We have no control over our destiny.

We need to do more long range planning, involving the community and staff in the direction we want to go. (Interviews of Central Office Administrators, March 31, 1982 - April 8, 1982).

The above comments by the second and third administrator reflect two different points of view towards the management of decline. The second administrator's remarks represent the perspective of the administration before July 1, 1981: "We have no control and long range planning is pointless. We just react to events." The third administrator speaks for the new, proactive administration, reflecting a recognition of the need to plan for the future and to involve the community and staff in determining the direction the district will take. The attitude of the second administrator may have been the reason the board did not consider any innovative approaches to decline even though

they said they favored such approaches. Recommended decision responses to decline which the board considered came from this administrator.

The first administrator was responsible for developing the budget. Since the state aid formula was the basis for determining budgeted revenues and enrollment was an important part of that formula, he was especially cognizant of declining enrollment and the effect it had on revenues from the state government.

Specific responses to the questions regarding the causes and results of the ten board decisions are summarized below.

Causes. The reported causes were very similar to those expressed by the board members. That is, lack of funds was the primary reason given for most of the decisions. Unlike the board, however, administrators did not mention the need to save money as the cause for the early retirement plan decision. They saw it as a way "to keep younger staff, instead of laying them off" rather than a cost cutting move (Interview of Central Office Administrator, March 31, 1982). Their greater knowledge of staff performance and the effect of losing the younger staff might have contributed to the administrators' perception of the cause for the early retirement plan.

Results. Again, the administration and the board perceived the results similarly.

Evaluation. Administrators volunteered their evaluations of the various decisions, just as board members had done. Those evaluations differed in two respects:

1. Administrators seemed less concerned about the cuts in elementary school programming, commenting that, "The cuts were the least detrimental that could have been made" (Interview of Central Office Administrators, April 8, 1982). School board members, on the other hand, made comments such as,

This is the last thing I wanted to see done.

I was personally opposed to it; we should have put the \$70,000 here instead of in the hot lunch program.

The board really agonized over this one.

I hated to do it.

This was a poor decision.

2. Some of the administrators were opposed to the board's acceptance of citizen pledges to support reinstated athletic programs. One commented,

I hate it, hate it. You get advice along with the money. Administrators are never appreciated for the decisions they have to make. They have more information. The citizens will want input into hiring and evaluating the coaches and setting priorities for the budget. Professional educators should make administrative decisions (Interview of Central Office Administrator, April 8, 1982).

Criteria. The criteria used by the administrators in evaluating the board's responses to decline were:

1. Effect on delivery of services.
2. Effect on budget.

3. Community reaction.
4. Effect on program opportunities for students.
5. Effect on board credibility.
6. Availability of other alternatives.
7. Effect on administrative decision making authority.

Action. The causal maps of administrators were very similar to those of board members. This is not surprising since most board decisions originated as administrative recommendations. Administrators tried to persuade board members to accept their interpretations of events when they made recommendations to the board.

Occasionally, however, board members and administrators interpreted events differently. Two examples are (a) the board's decision to accept an IOU for athletic programs from a citizens booster group and (b) the reduction in elementary art, music and physical education programming.

Central office administrators did not think that accepting an IOU from the athletic boosters was wise because such an action would give the boosters some influence over athletic programming decisions. The administrators thought such an influence would be an improper constraint on their decision making power. Only one board member saw that decision making constraint as a drawback. Ulrich believed that the board, not the administration, would lose control over athletic programming if the IOU were accepted, and she voted against the recommendation. The rest of the board

members accepted the IOU with enthusiasm so that they would not have to make severe cuts in the athletic program. The administration recommended the acceptance of the IOU, in spite of their reservations, because they, like the board members, recognized that the athletic boosters represented a strong community interest. That is, they realized that there was an external constituent group who wanted the athletic programs protected from cuts, and they perceived that the group had power vis a vis the board because of the influence the members of the group had in the community. This influence was a potential threat to the success of future millage campaigns if the board alienated the group.

The reduction in elementary art, music and physical education was viewed with more concern by board members than by administrators. The former saw the cuts as significant reductions in a valued activity. The latter saw the cuts as a way to reduce costs and to save the core curriculum.

In the first instance, administrators viewed the board's decision as having a negative impact on their own self interest, their decision making power. The majority of the board members did not see that the boosters would have any influence on administrative or board decision making. This difference in perspective between board members and administrators may have reflected their different past experiences. Administrators were used to having to deal with the demands of community groups and individuals, and they

were reluctant to create another constituency and to give it control over the funding of a popular activity, athletics. Board members were less aware of the political process which characterized decision making in the district.

Board members seemed to attach greater value to the elementary programs which were cut than the administrators did. Perhaps this was because board members identified with other parents in the community who were opposed to eliminating any educational programming. The administrators, who were more knowledgeable about the activities, did not seem to be as concerned about the loss in programming. In both of these cases, board members and administrators agreed that the action had to be taken, regardless of whether they liked it or not.

If administrators were not successful in persuading board members to their point of view, administrators were left with no recourse except to accept the board's decision. During the period of July, 1981 through July, 1983, there were no major decisions where this occurred.

Union Executive Board Members

Decline. Executive board members' views on decline were obtained indirectly by asking them:

1. Do you think we need long range or short range solutions to the problem of declining enrollment and income?

2. Have you any other thoughts about how we ought to

respond to changes in income or enrollment?

Three out of four union board members expressed the belief that both short and long range solutions were needed. The fourth saw the problem as being long term and therefore in need of a long range solution.

We have to study long term solutions. The population decline is not temporary. In business if demand goes up they don't expand capacity, they just add another shift. Perhaps we could use this idea in education if enrollment goes up after we close a building.

We need both short and long range solutions. Decline is hard to predict, so we have to do some short range planning, but we also need to look at some long range solutions.

It's more of a long range problem: rising energy costs, leveling off of enrollments, public unwillingness to vote millages. The auto industry is not going to come back that strong.

We need a 10 year plan. This is a long range problem and we need a long range solution. Money is the basic problem; we can't support the school with just local tax money. What can we do in the next 10 to 25 years? It requires a different kind of thinking than is prevalent locally.

In response to the second question, "have you other thoughts about how we ought to respond?", respondents suggested that the board be more creative in its responses to decline and include more groups and individuals in the decision making process.

The district needs to be more open to change and creativity. For example, we could have job sharing and flexible class size. Perhaps we should think through some of the programs we have. We are still throwing money at programs to keep them alive, but perhaps we are giving them so little money, they can't really reach their goal anymore.

We should encourage better lobbying efforts to get

the legislature to support education. A joint effort is needed.

The board should work on getting input from everyone: citizens and employees. Involve employees in problem solving so they can feel they own the solutions. Trust has to be there. Staff needs to feel there is real follow through on suggestions. This establishes more trust for a continuing cycle. The Quality of Work Life approach builds trust and ownership of ideas as evidenced by the General Motors and Ford contracts. Ford used the Quality of Work Life approach and got a better contract as a result. (Interviews of Union Executive Board Members, April 12 - May 15, 1982).

Of the three groups: the board, central office administrators and the union executive board, the latter were the most creative in thinking of new approaches to solving the problems caused by a declining environment. The creative, innovative approach taken by the union executive board members is what would have been expected based on the writings of Cyert (1978), Hedberg, Nystrom and Starbuck (1976) and Weick (1979). Innovation and self-designing systems of organization are prescribed as appropriate responses to environmental change by these theorists. The attempts by the members of the board and the administration to increase centralization, standardization and control are predicted by the crisis literature (Khandwalla, 1978). That is, organizations experiencing crises are characterized by the contraction of authority, a decrease in innovative behavior and increased formalization. The difference in reactions could be due to whether or not decline was perceived as a crisis event.

The members of the union executive board were not directly affected by declining enrollment and inadequate funds. They had enough tenure in the district to avoid being laid off as a result of the declining student population. The presence of the union gave them enough power to protect their salaries.

The members of the administration and board, however, were affected by the decline events. Board members had to decide which programs to cut, knowing that some constituent groups would be unhappy no matter which alternative they chose. Administrators were judged by the perceived effectiveness of the school district. The elimination of educational programs was considered a negative action by constituent groups. Efficiency was highly valued, however, so there was an attempt to justify any changes as making the system more efficient.

Responses to more specific questions regarding the causes and results of the ten board decisions are summarized below.

Causes. Members of the union executive board perceived the causes for the majority of the board decisions to be financial in nature. One exception was the Early Retirement Plan which the union reported to have been due to a desire to avoid laying off younger teachers, rather than a desire to save money. An unintended consequence of the plan, as reported by the president of the teachers' union, was,

Resentments are built up by the younger staff against the older teachers because of lay-offs. They are laid off even when they are doing a good job and some of the older staff are just resting on their laurels. It's most unfortunate. Younger faculty should be looking up to the older members because of their experiences and insights (Interview of Union president, April 12, 1982).

The other exceptions were accepting a pledge of financial support from citizens who wanted athletic programs restored and asking the staff for concessions. The reinstatement of previously cut athletic programs was reported to have been the result of community pressure. Board members and administrators also perceived that to have been the cause. The staff wage concessions request was attributed to being a recommendation by the administration.

The early retirement plan was sold at the board meeting as being advantageous because it allowed the district to avoid laying off younger teachers. The fact that it also saved the district money was not emphasized in the oral presentation although it was clearly explained in the written materials. The latter were sent to school board members before the meeting. With the exception of the union president, the members of the executive board did not receive the packets. The difference in causal maps, therefore, could have been due to differences in information received from the environment.

The staff wage concession request had a direct effect on the teachers. They may have attributed the cause to being a recommendation of the administration rather than an

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attempt to save money because of a suspicion on their part that it was simply harassment by the administration. The relationship between the members of the union and the members of the board and administration had not been good in the past. The teachers had struck for 17 days the previous year and there were still hard feelings as a result. In addition, immediately after the strike was settled, the business manager discovered the district was going to have more money than he had anticipated. It was apparently an honest mistake, but the board and the administration lost all credibility with the union members, who thought they had been deliberately misled.

Results. The executive board, like the Board of Education, saw the outcome of cuts in elementary programming more negatively than did the administrators. Members of both boards reported the result of such cuts as being reduced programming which was harmful to students. In addition, reduced programming meant fewer teaching positions would be available and more teachers would have to be laid off in the future. The administrators, on the other hand, mentioned reduced costs as being the only outcome. The board members and the teachers seemed to have been impacted more by these cuts than were the administrators whose jobs were not affected. For some reason, the administrators did not identify with the parents who were unhappy that their children would have fewer educational opportunities.

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Union members were the only group that mentioned the fact that the paraprofessional decision resulted in a grievance. Board members did not usually pay close attention to grievances or to their outcome. Administrators were more aware of the grievances than were the board members, but they viewed them as a nuisance rather than as a serious constraint.

Evaluation. As was the case with the other two groups, members of the executive board volunteered their own evaluations regarding most of the board decisions. Those decisions which were perceived to have a negative impact on teachers, students and/or the union were rated unfavorably. Included in those decisions were:

1. Using paraprofessionals in the libraries.
2. Shortening the high school day.
3. Cutting the elementary school program.
4. Asking the staff for concessions.

Using paraprofessionals was regarded as subcontracting by the union executive board who filed a grievance in response to the board's decision. The board eventually agreed not to subcontract in order to prevent the union from taking the issue to arbitration. Shortening the high school day and reducing elementary school programming were rated unfavorably because of the negative impacts on students. Not mentioned, although the members of the executive board must have been aware of it, was the negative impact on the

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teaching staff. Fourteen teaching positions were eliminated when the high school day was shortened.

Asking the staff for concessions received the most negative reaction. As several members said,

Hell, no! Asking the staff to take a cut in benefits is asking them to take a reduction in salary. No one is worth less now than they were before.

What right do they have to ask that when they are not managing resources wisely? We are being asked to pay for other people's mistakes. Maybe they should have looked at closing a building sooner. They just didn't want to do it.

I don't feel teachers should be asked to subsidize the school system twice: once as a taxpayer and twice in getting lower salaries.

Asking employees for help in solving problems is positive if both sides are open about it and there are no hidden agendas. There has to be a lot of trust. (Interviews of Union Executive Board Members, April 12, 1982).

While union executive board members answered that lack of money was the cause for many of the board's decline related decisions when they were specifically asked, other causes were mentioned in discussing the various issues. Accusations of "poor management" surfaced several times during the interviews along with comments that indicated the interviewee thought that members of the board and/or administration were manipulative and could not be trusted. Again, these comments reflected feelings that probably resulted from the previous year's teacher strike as well as other union frustrations with administrative actions. The fact that these came out indirectly may be an indication of

the value of using unstructured as well as structured interviews. It appears that direct questions did not always elicit a person's true feelings and beliefs.

Those decisions which received favorable ratings were perceived to have had positive impacts on teachers and students. Included in those decisions were:

1. Offering an early retirement plan.
2. Eliminating four administrative positions.
3. Using "one-mill monies".
4. Increasing building rental fees.
5. Reorganizing the bus routes.
6. Accepting citizen pledges of money for sports.

The early retirement plan was good for teachers, providing large sums of money (\$10,000) to those choosing to retire early and saving the jobs of those who would otherwise have been laid off. "Improving the teacher/administrator ratio" by laying off administrators was desirable from the teachers' point of view. Teachers felt that declining enrollment had impacted more negatively on teachers than on any other group. This feeling is supported by research by Ford (1980), who found that the number of administrators decreases more slowly than the number of teachers when enrollment declines. In fact, in the majority of school districts, administrative personnel are actually added during periods of decline. This phenomenon may be due to the ability of administrators to "protect

their own" because of their ability to influence board members. The fact that the previous superintendent could not protect his administrators was an indication of his weak political power in relation to the Board of Education.

The use of "one-mill monies", increasing building rental fess and reorganizing the bus routes all had the effect of reducing the need to cut programs in order to balance the budget. Since cutting programs meant cutting staff, as well, any measure that reduced the necessity for cutting programs would tend to be viewed favorably by the union.

Accepting citizen pledges resulted in increased programming for students which also meant some teaachers would have opportunities to earn extra pay.

Criteria. The criteria used by members of the union executive boardtd in evaluating board responses to decline were:

1. Effect on job security of union members.
2. Effect on number of jobs in the bargaining unit.
3. Effect on staff compensation (salary and fringe benefits).
4. Effect on administrator/teacher ratio.
5. Effect on student programming.
6. Effect on delivery of services.
7. Effect on decision making authority of staff.
8. Effect on equity of opportunities offered to

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students.

A constituent group's use of criteria in making judgements about organizational effectiveness is consistent with Pfeffer and Salancik's (1978) perspective on organizational effectiveness. That is, organizational effectiveness is a standard of how well an organization is doing in meeting the criteria for organizational performance subscribed to by various groups and organizations concerned with its activities. Since each group or organization will have its own criteria, assessments of organizational effectiveness will vary.

Action. Each member of the teachers' union executive board evaluated the board's decisions in relation to that member's criteria. As we have seen, if executive board members viewed the decision as being a threat to their best interests, they attempted to block that decision if they perceived that they had the power to do so. The labor relations process is a form of conflict resolution that is available to unionized employees. The state labor law (PERA) requires the board to bargain with its unionized employees on issues involving hours, wages and working conditions. Thus, the board cannot unilaterally force the union to take wage concessions, for example. During the effective dates of the contract, both the board and the union must follow it. If the union believes that the board has violated the contract, as it did in the case of the paraprofessional

decision, then it may file a grievance and ultimately take the issue to arbitration. If the arbitrator agrees that the contract has been violated, it may require the board to rescind its action, as it did in the case of Board Policy #4112, Teacher Qualifications. The union may also file an unfair labor practice complaint with the Michigan Employment Relations Commission. It did so during the 1980 teachers' strike, when the board reduced the number of hours at the high school from seven to six (Morning News, September 3, 1980).

In addition to the labor relations process, the union may write letters to the board of education, speak on issues at board meetings, personally contact board members, file lawsuits, and try to "conduct an end run" around the board and/or administration. As noted earlier, the union filed a lawsuit against the Board of Education on December 16, 1980. It charged the board with violating the Open Meetings Act by convening in closed session for unspecified or illegal reasons, or both (Morning News, February 4, 1981). The union attempted to make an "end-run" around the board and administration when it called a public meeting to explain its position on the strike to community members (Morning News, September 2, 1980). [An "end-run" is a labor relations term. It refers to the phenomenon whereby unions attempt to get what they want by "going around" the person(s) (administrators and/or board members) with whom they are

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supposed to resolve conflicts. The union appeals to members of the public directly in hopes that they will pressure administrators and/or board members into making the concessions the union members want.]

Sense Making Model

The model, shown in Figure 30, explains the sense making process used by an individual member of the dominant coalition or one of the constituent groups (central office administrators or union executive board members). The individual is an appropriate unit of analysis since it is individuals who bracket and interpret the flow of equivocal information that they receive from the environment (Weick, 1979). As Silverman (1970) suggests, in order to understand and predict the behavior of individuals, we need to know what meanings they attach to events. The causal mapping technique developed by Weick (1979) was used to gather and analyze data on the meanings members of the dominant coalition and of two constituent groups attached to the phenomenon of decline and to ten board decisions made in response to that decline. The model reflects the results of that analysis as well as the writings of Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and Weick (1979).

Enacted Environment

As predicted by the integrated model shown in Figure

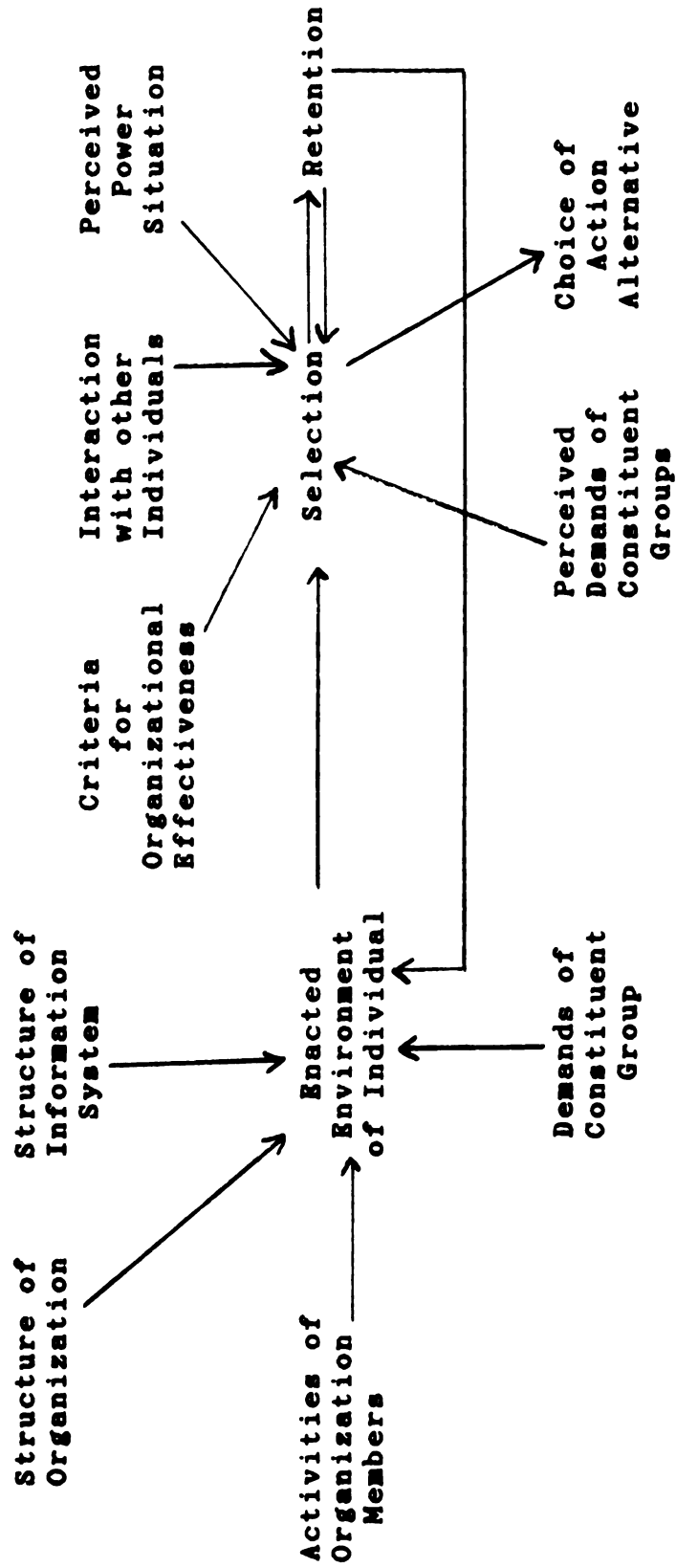


Figure 30

Sense Making Model

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30, the enacted environment was influenced by the structure of the organization, the structure of the information system, the activities of organizational members, interpretations of past experience (retention) and the demands of powerful constituent groups. Quantitative information that dealt with critical activities, such as balancing the budget, was noticed and attended to by members of the dominant coalition.

Selection

Individuals interpreted their enacted environments (selection) using causal maps from their memory (retention) or from conversations they had had with other individuals (double interacts). This selection process was also influenced by three other variables which were not part of the integrated model: perceived constituent demands, criteria for organizational effectiveness and the perceived power situation.

Perceived Constituent Demands

In attributing the causes of the board decisions, individuals reported that some were the result of "community pressure" (the decision to accept an IOU from the Athletic Boosters) and some were the recommendation of the administration (the decision to ask the staff for wage concessions). These attributions were influenced by the individual's perception of constituent group demands.

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Criteria for Organizational Effectiveness

Members of the dominant coalition and of the constituent groups not only applied causal maps to equivalent information from the environment, they also used that information to make judgements about organizational effectiveness. As predicted by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978), each member had a set of criteria against which the performance of organizational members was evaluated.

Perceived Power Situation

The perceived power situation had two reported effects.

1. It influenced whether or not a constituent group was attributed to be the cause of a particular decision. The Athletic Boosters were perceived to have enough power that their desire to support athletic programming had to be accepted.

2. It influenced the choice of action alternatives made by members of the dominant coalition and/or the constituent groups. As Coleman (1957) suggests, individuals who believed that their economic or value interests had been or were going to be threatened, considered taking some kind of action. The type of action they chose to pursue depended on their perceived alternatives and on their perception of their power vis a vis the dominant coalition. The Athletic Boosters believed they could persuade the board to restore athletic programming if they offered financial support. The teachers' union perceived it had enough power to prevent the

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board from subcontracting and from implementing wage concessions.

Action

After interpreting their enacted environments, individuals sometimes acted. These actions became part of the equivocal, environmental information which was available for bracketing by others. For example, the teachers' union filed a grievance in response to the board's decision to use paraprofessionals in the elementary libraries. That grievance became part of the equivocal information board members received from the environment. It was bracketed, interpreted and evaluated. Members of the board judged the grievance as being a threat and acted by rejecting it. Thus a series of reciprocal interactions are engaged in as members of the dominant coalition and of constituent groups bracket, interpret and respond to each others' behaviors. Knowing the meanings the members attach to their own behaviors and to those of others, helps us to explain and predict those behaviors.

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CHAPTER 10

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to examine the process whereby organizational decision makers (the dominant coalition) manage and are influenced by interest (constituent) groups in a declining environment. The sense making process used by members of the dominant coalition as well as by members of constituent groups was also investigated.

Relevant Literature

The relevant decline literature from the fields of business, political science and education was reviewed. An integrative model which reflects the conceptualization of the decline phenomenon as discussed by Levine (1978 and 1981), Jick and Murray (1982) and Zammuto and Cameron (1983) was constructed (see Figure 31).

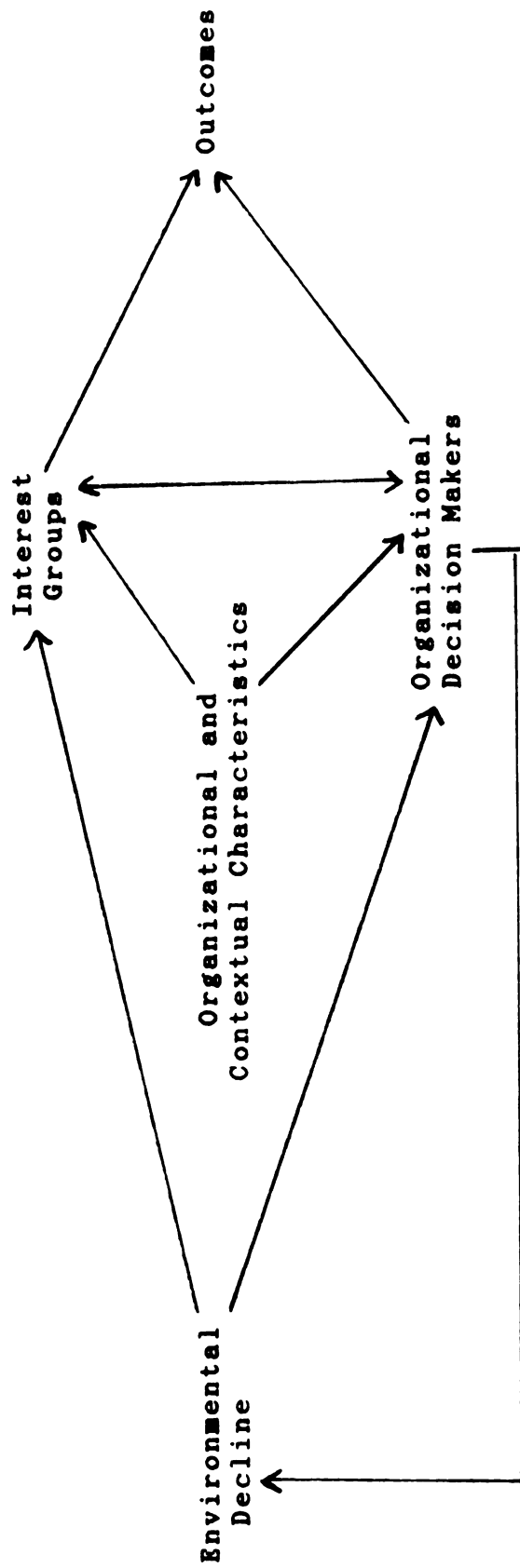


Figure 31

Integrative Model

Research Questions

While the integrative model describes some variables that are factors in the phenomenon of decline, it fails to explain the process whereby an organization's decision makers manage external and internal constituent groups within a declining environment. In order to understand this process, the researcher looked at two levels (units) of analysis: the group or organizational level and the individual level.

At the group or organizational level, the following questions were asked:

1. How does the dominant coalition identify and respond to the decline phenomenon, and what factors appear to influence that process?

2. In what ways do external and internal constituent groups identify and react to the decline responses chosen by the dominant coalition, and why?

3. How does the dominant coalition manage the resulting actions and demands of external and internal constituent groups?

Since group actions are the result of an interactive process which takes place among individual members of the group, it was necessary to understand the sense making process used by those individuals. That is, how did they identify, interpret and react to actions taken by others. As Silverman (1978) and Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) have

pointed out, it is individual actors who enact their own environments and who attach meaning to the behaviors of others. Therefore, it was necessary to look at the individual unit of analysis in order to understand the behaviors of members of the dominant coalition and of constituent groups. Thus, both the organizational and the individual unit of analysis were utilized.

Findings

Perceptions of Decline

The decline experienced by the school district was similar to that described by Zammuto and Cameron (1983). That is, decline was an environmental phenomenon, a change in the size and/or shape of the district's niche.

The amount of resources available compared to the cost of continuing to provide the same level of services was inadequate. Decreasing demand for the district's traditional services was accompanied by an increasing demand for other programming, such as preschool programs and adult education opportunities. Initially, the latter was not noticed, that is organizational decision makers were not aware of the opportunities to expand into other areas.

Members of the Board of Education and central office administrators neither perceived decline as failure nor denied its existence. They viewed the decline being experienced by the school district as resulting from

circumstances beyond their control: inadequate resources and declining enrollment.

Responses to Decline

Domain defense was attempted by the Board of Education. When it was unable to generate support for its current domain by obtaining a property tax increase, the board had to fall back on the strategic response of domain consolidation, reducing the size of the domain. It attempted to make both selective and across the board cutbacks; however, constituent groups were able to prevent the implementation of targeted cuts.

The decline responses chosen by board members were influenced by (a) their perceptions of what powerful constituent groups wanted, (b) their values, (c) past board decisions and (d) the perceived decision making paradigm used by an outside funding agency in reducing funds available to the district.

Reaction to Decline Responses

Closing an elementary school evoked the most visible reaction of any of the decline related decisions made by the Board of Education. Therefore, it was the primary data source for this discussion of how others reacted to board decisions made in response to environmental decline.

Community Conflict. The closing of an elementary school met all the criteria of an event that leads to organized opposition (Cataldo and Holm, 1983; Coleman, 1957). An

action which impacted upon an important area of some community members' lives occurred and opposition developed. During the course of the conflict, relationships became polarized to the extent that a partisan constituent group (PINS) was formed. PINS served as a communication center, planning and organizing meetings and other activities. New and different issues were added by PINS in an attempt to bring other individuals and groups into the conflict.

While the leader of the partisan group was inexperienced in conflict resolution, he was not an extremist, as predicted by Coleman (1957). He was sometimes pushed into taking immoderate positions by the bolder members of the partisan group.

There was some evidence of reciprocal causation, or vicious circles. Attacks on board members by members of the constituent group brought forth heated responses from board members. As the polarization increased, the more moderate members of PINS drifted away leaving the immoderates in control of the organization.

The availability of procedures for expressing dissatisfaction did not prevent conflict over the school closing situation from occurring. While the mass media did not directly influence community members' opinions regarding the conflict, it did provide an important vehicle for PINS in the initiation and continuation of the conflict. It was also the means by which both the board and PINS were able to

influence the members of the community.

Conflict process. Most of the members of the community whose children attended Bach School and/or who lived in its neighborhood experienced frustration when the board voted to close their school. The school closing had the characteristics of crisis events as described by Hermann (1969): time pressure and severity. Bach parents and residents responded as people who have experienced a crisis event would be expected to behave. Their reactions were initial shock (numbed inaction) followed by defensive retreat (fighting back, refusal to change) as they fought to prevent the closing from occurring.

Thus began an interaction between members of the dominant coalition, board members plus the superintendent, and a constituent group, PINS. Each party's behavior served as a stimulus for the other's response. During the interaction, each party changed its conceptualization of the conflict issue resulting in a change in the party's behavior.

The personality characteristics of the individual members of each social unit who were party to the conflict were an important factor in the degree of assertiveness or cooperativeness present on each side. Neither party acted as a monolith. Rather, individual members' conceptualizations and behaviors impacted the action that was formally taken by a particular party. Individual behaviors also affected the

outcome of the conflict directly when individuals acted outside the interaction that was taking place between the parties.

Management of Constituent Groups

Constituent groups. Internal and external constituent groups attempted to influence the constraints, goals and referents adopted by the dominant coalition. Their degree of success was a function of their power in the organization and of their ability to recognize and exploit the weaknesses of the dominant coalition and other constituent groups.

The members of constituent groups shared common interests, but they did not always agree on the conceptualization of a particular situation. Constituent subgroups existed within the constituency and they vied for influence over constituent goals, constraints and referents in much the same way that constituent groups bargained within the organization. As a constituent group appeared less likely to be able to achieve its goal, it became less cohesive and members disappeared in the reverse order of their degree of commitment.

The degree to which the dominant coalition was forced to bargain with constituent groups depended upon the power of the group. The result of the bargaining process was a focusing of attention on any discrepancies between a referent held by the dominant coalition, and/or the constituent group, and organizational performance. Prior

conceptualizations by members of the dominant coalition appeared to influence whether or not the demands and suggestions of the constituent groups were accurately perceived.

Conflict within the dominant coalition. The board experienced group conflict in trying to decide how many and which schools to close. Persuasion and bargaining were used in an attempt to resolve the conflict. Those issues that could not be settled by consensus were resolved by majority vote. Any residues of unresolved conflict sometimes influenced future board interactions on the same or different issues.

Response by coalition to constituent group demands. In school districts, legislation and the nonsubstitutability of resources make the avoidance of constituent group influence and control difficult. Yet, the district's high dependence on some constituent groups and the uncertainty of their relationships with those groups require them to be highly responsive. The board met that need to be highly responsive by using cooptation and by managing the demands of constituent groups. That is, it:

1. Recognized which groups were important (powerful) because of their control over strategic contingencies.
2. Was aware of the referents used by the various constituent groups in evaluating the organization's effectiveness.

3. Balanced the demands of various groups so that the dominant coalition at least satisfied the referents of the most powerful groups.

Crisis Syndrome Behavior

The individuals who experienced the loss of their school perceived it as a crisis event and as a personal loss. They reacted accordingly. That is, their first reaction was numb inaction followed by defensive retreat, bargaining, depression and finally acceptance of the situation.

Sense Making

Individuals bracketed (enacted) certain segments of the equivocal information they were receiving from the environment that was related to decline. The enactment process was influenced by the structure of the organization, the structure of the information system, the activities of organizational members, interpretations of past experience and the demands of powerful constituent groups.

Individuals interpreted (selected) their enacted environments using causal maps from their memory or from conversations they had with other individuals. Other variables which also influenced the interpretation process were: perceived constituent demands, criteria for organizational effectiveness and the perceived power situation.

After interpreting their enacted environments,

individuals sometimes acted. These actions became part of the equivocal, environmental information which was available for bracketing and interpreting by others. Thus, a series of reciprocal interactions were engaged in as members of the dominant coalition and of constituent groups bracketed, interpreted and responded to each others' behaviors.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study can be expressed in terms of the research questions posed earlier. That is,

1. How did the dominant coalition identify and respond to the decline phenomenon, and what factors appeared to influence that process?

2. In what ways did external and internal constituent groups identify and react to the decline responses chosen by the dominant coalition, and why?

3. How did the dominant coalition manage the resulting actions and demands of external and internal constituent groups?

Since group action is a result of individual action, the issue of how individuals identify, interpret and react to the phenomenon of decline is an integral part of the above three questions and must be answered in conjunction with them.

Identification and Response to Decline
by Dominant Coalition

Equivocal information regarding environmental decline was received by members of the dominant coalition. The manner in which that information was bracketed, interpreted and acted upon by individuals was influenced by:

1. Relative position in the organization structure.
2. The structure of the information system.
3. The activities of organizational members.
4. Interpretations of past experience.
5. Perceived changes in the size and/or shape of the organization's niche.
6. The perceived decision making paradigm used by outside funding agencies in reducing funding levels.
7. The perceived response time.
8. The perceived demands of constituent groups.
9. The perceived power situation.
10. The individual's criteria for organizational effectiveness.

Members of the coalition decided how to respond to their enacted environments. If there was disagreement within the coalition, persuasion and bargaining were used in an attempt to reach consensus. If those techniques were not successful, the issue was settled by voting. Any residues of unresolved conflict affected future interactions on the same or different issues.

Identification and Reaction to Responses
by Constituent Groups

Equivocal information regarding the actions taken by members of the dominant coalition in response to decline was received by members of the constituent group. The manner in which it was bracketed, interpreted and acted upon by individuals was influenced by:

1. The perceived crisis and personal loss characteristics of the event.

2. The event's impact on important areas of the individual's life.

3. The perceived power situation.

4. The degree of integration of the community's social structure.

5. The degree and type of coverage by the mass media.

6. The perceived decision making strategy used by the dominant coalition.

7. The degree to which constituent group members believed that their demands were heard, understood and considered by the coalition.

Individual members did not always agree on the interpretation of a particular situation. They sometimes vied among themselves for influence over constituent goals, constraints and referents. In addition to attempting to influence the outcome of these interactions within the constituency, individuals also acted separately on occasion.

The actions taken by the constituent group and/or its individual members became part of the equivocal environmental information received by members of other constituent groups and members of the dominant coalition. Thus, a series of reciprocal interactions were engaged in as members of the dominant coalition and of constituent groups bracketed, interpreted and responded to each others' behaviors.

Management of Constituent Groups by Dominant Coalition

Required to be responsive on the one hand, and constrained from avoiding the influence and control of constituent groups on the other, the dominant coalition was forced to manage the demands of constituent groups. It did so by:

1. Identifying constituent groups and estimating their power vis a vis the dominant coalition.
2. Identifying the demands and referents of constituent groups.
3. Balancing coalition responses to the demands of various groups so that the referents of the most powerful groups were satisfied.

Further Research

Since this was an exploratory study, a number of hypotheses have been suggested which need to be tested in

other school districts as well as in other types of organizations.

Hypotheses

1. As noted in the present study, members of the dominant coalition of a public sector organization tend to view decline as an external phenomenon over which they have no control.

2. As suggested by Jick and Murray (1982), how the decline is perceived by members of the dominant coalition affects the strategic decision responses they make. That is,

a. If decline is seen as a reduction in the size of the organization's niche, attempts will be made to defend the organization's domain by generating support from resource providers, as predicted by Zammuto and Cameron (1983). If domain defense fails, domain consolidation will take place, as noted in the present study. That is, cuts will be made. The cutbacks may be across the board or selective. If they are selective, the power of constituent groups will affect their implementation, as suggested by Levine (1981) and as noted in the present study.

b. If decline is seen as a change in the shape of the organization's niche, attempts may be made to change the organization's programming to fit the demands of its changing environment. In the present study, the new superintendent saw these opportunities and persuaded the board members to take advantage of them.

c. If the decrease in funds from an outside funding agency is believed to have been the result of a rational decision making process, more information will be provided, according to Jick and Murray (1982).

d. If the decrease is believed to have been the result of a political decision making process, the perceived power of the dominant coalition vis a vis the funding agency will become important in deciding whether or not to accept or fight the agency's decision, as predicted by Jick and Murray (1982) and as evidenced by the present study.

3. The perceived power and demands of constituent groups affects the decision making strategies chosen by the dominant coalition, as noted in the current study.

4. The power of constituent groups vis a vis the dominant coalition is a function of their control over strategic contingencies, their awareness of that control and of their ability to accurately perceive the weaknesses of the dominant coalition and other constituent groups, as suggested by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and by the present study.

5. Decline has a cumulative effect.

a. As noted in the present study, past decisions by the dominant coalition act as a constraint on current alternative choices available to the coalition.

b. Past behaviors by all parties affect the current conceptualizations of the situation and of the action

alternatives held by the parties, as predicted by Thomas (1976) and by the present study.

6. Some decline related responses, such as school closings, may be perceived as crisis events and personal losses by those affected. If they are, the affected persons will react with a series of behaviors: dumb inaction, defensive retreat, bargaining, resignation and acceptance as predicted by Kubler-Ross and as seen in the present study.

7. The presence of procedures for expressing opposition are not sufficient to prevent conflict unless the opposition believes that their opinions are heard, understood and considered by the dominant coalition. This finding from the present study is contrary to that predicted by Coleman (1957).

8. As noted in the present study, individuals affect the outcome of community conflict as representatives of their respective groups, as influences on the group's decision making process and as individual actors. The behavioral dispositions and prior experience of individuals influence the conflict, as suggested by Thomas (1976).

9. Conflict within the dominant coalition over how to respond to decline and to constituent group demands may be caused by individual and/or group conflict, as predicted by March and Simon (1958). Persuasion and bargaining are used in an attempt to resolve those conflicts but issues on which consensus cannot be reached, are resolved by voting, as

noted in the present study. Residues of unresolved conflict may affect future interactions within the coalition, as suggested by Pondy (1967).

10. Constituent groups are made up of subgroups who vie for power with others in the group for adoption of their referents, constraints and goals, as suggested by the present study.

11. As noted in the present study, government groups, such as school boards, are constrained in their ability to avoid the influence and control of constituent groups by legislation and by the nonsubstitutability of their resources.

12. Dominant coalitions must be highly responsive to those constituent groups upon whom they are dependent and with whom they have an uncertain relationship, as predicted by Aldrich (1979) and as seen in the present study.

13. As predicted by Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) and as noted in the present study, if dominant coalitions are not able to avoid the influence and control of those constituent groups to whom they must respond, they manage the demand of those groups by:

- a. Identifying powerful constituent groups,
- b. Identifying the demands and referents of constituent groups,
- c. Balancing coalition responses to the demands of various groups so that the referents of the most powerful

groups are satisfied.

14. A series of reciprocal interactions are engaged in as members of the dominant coalition and of constituent groups bracket, interpret and respond to each other's behaviors, as noted in the present study.

Practical Implications

The current study is of value to organizational theorists and practicing managers. The current organizational theory literature does not explain processes which occur when decline takes place. It mentions some important variables: organizational decision makers, declining resources, and interest groups. However, how the variables interact with each other is not explained by the models in the literature. The model which was developed as a result of this study indicates how organizational decision makers manage interest groups in a declining environment.

Practicing managers in the field of education are limited by the educational literature which admonishes them to cope with decline by (a) improving their planning techniques and (b) being more participative in their decision making. Berger (1982) found that the use of these strategies has not prevented negative reactions to cutback decisions. The present study indicates why. That is, in an educational setting, the dominant coalition cannot avoid the

influence and control of constituent groups. Therefore, they (a) must identify the groups, (b) assess their power, demands and referents, and (c) balance their responses to the demands of various groups in such a way that the referents of the most powerful groups are satisfied. More planning and/or greater involvement in the decision making process by affected groups does not in and of itself guarantee that the referents of constituent groups will be satisfied.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

DATA

Sample of Formal Interviews

Smith: I have been thinking about the school closings and wondering what you would think about postponing the decision on which schools we should close, since the enrollment has changed from what was predicted.

Ulrich: Well, \$150,000 is a lot of money to save, but maybe its too short a time to design the curriculum for the middle school. Also, there has been a change in enrollment. I guess that for those reasons I am in favor of postponing the decision.

Closing schools is a good idea and we have to face it some time. If the oil drilling is bringing people in - but that is iffy - we don't know if we can hang on to the kids. It may boom. The Harold farm north of town is pumping 50 barrels an hour.

If we move sixth graders to the junior high, we need to give them what we've promised, but there is only a short time to plan. Is it possible?

Smith: What do you think of naming the buildings to be closed now, but keeping them open until the fall of 84?

Ulrich: That's a possibility. It's more or less already decided as to what buildings will be closed. Last January the superintendent met with some special education parents and asked them what they thought about moving the special education programs to the elementary school. Someone from the city is interested in Tappan school. I think the superintendent is leaning towards Tappan and Bach. He has specific ideas in mind for them. I hate to see it be any of them. The layout at Tappan is really unique. I hate to lose it to the school district, but that is why people are interested in it. It would be great for community programming. It wouldn't be so bad if it were used for that. I would hate to see it go to a private developer. It has more marketability than Bach, though.

APPENDIX

Sample of Archival Data

Minutes of October 18, Board Meeting

Mr. Anderson presented his final report to the Board on Future Building Needs for the Eureka School District. After taking into consideration the input from the community meetings, Board of Education discussion at meetings on October 4 and 11, and updated enrollment information, the Board took the following action:

1. Motion was made by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mrs. Smith to close one elementary school at the end of the 1982-83 school year. Motion carried. (6 in favor, 1 opposed - Kirby)

2. A motion was made by Mrs. Smith and seconded by Mr. Allen that Bach Elementary School be closed at the end of the 1982-83 school year. Motion carried.

3. A motion was made by Mr. Allen and seconded by Mr. Kirby that new boundaries be established for the remaining six elementary schools and that a recommendation be presented to the Board on January 17, 1983. Mr. Ferguson asked that the Board receive a report and have a public hearing prior to a final decision. Motion carried.

4. A motion was made by Mrs. Ulrich and seconded that the administration provide the Board with a specific plan for the use of Bach on January 17, 1983. Motion carried.

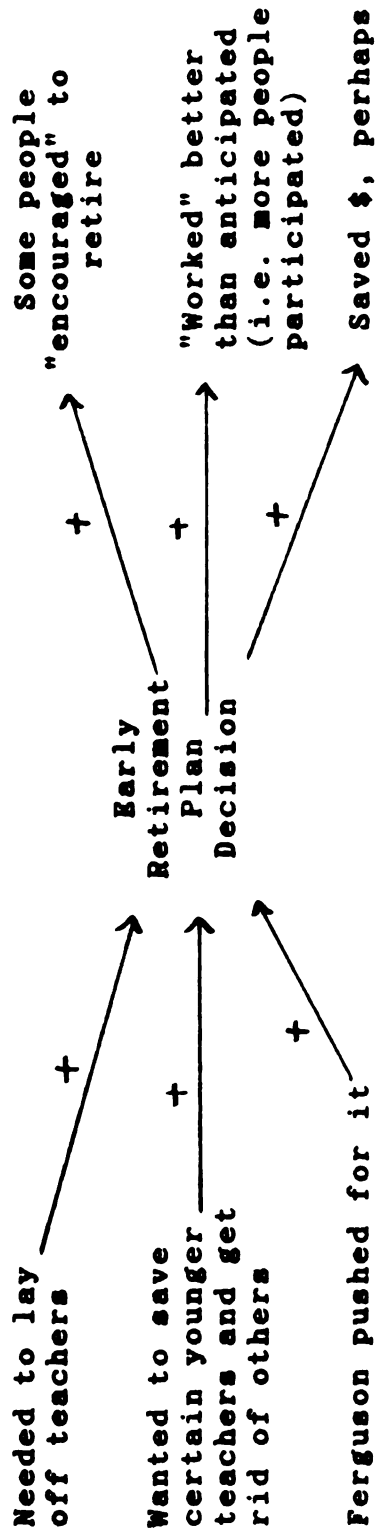


Figure A-1

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member A

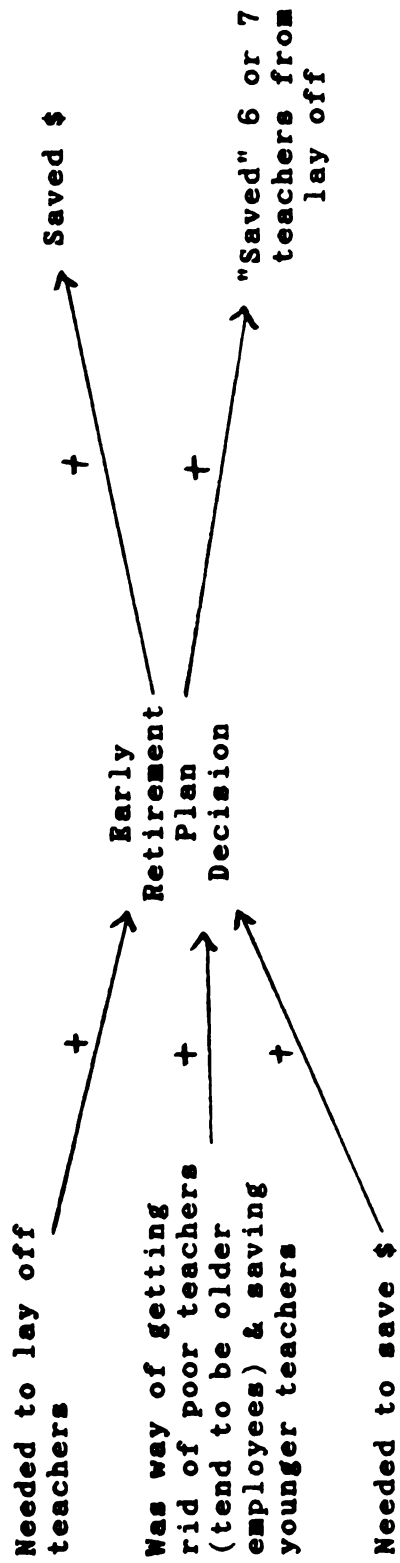


Figure A-2

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member B

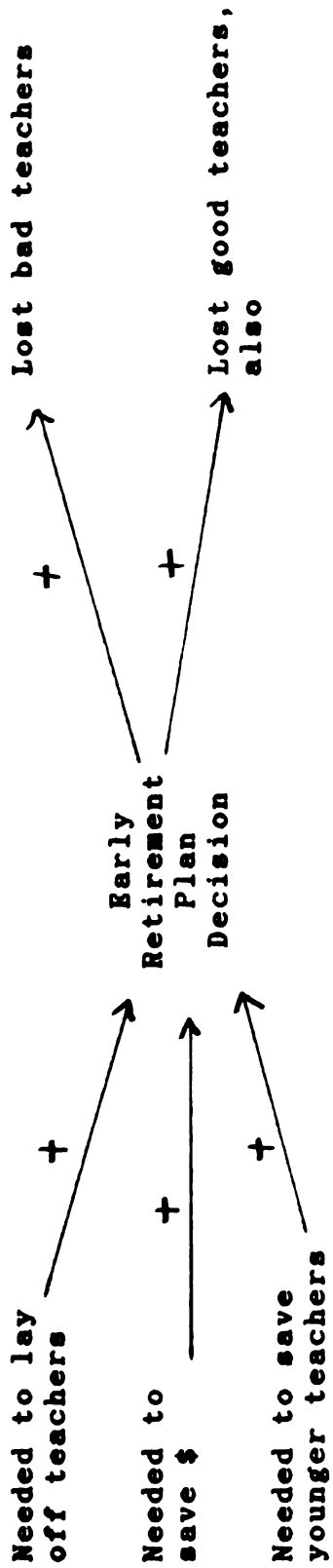


Figure A-3

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member C

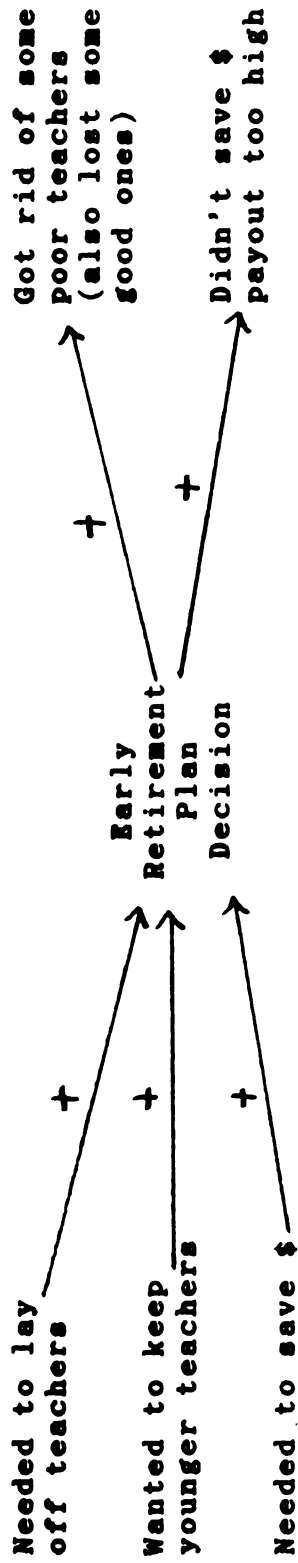


Figure A-4

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member D

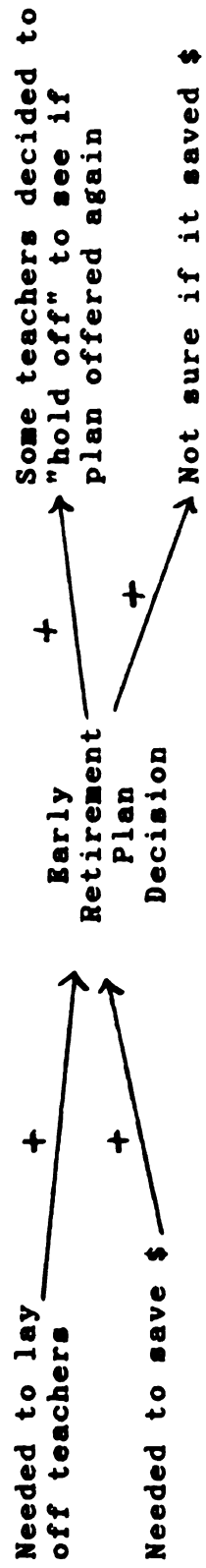


Figure A-5

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member R

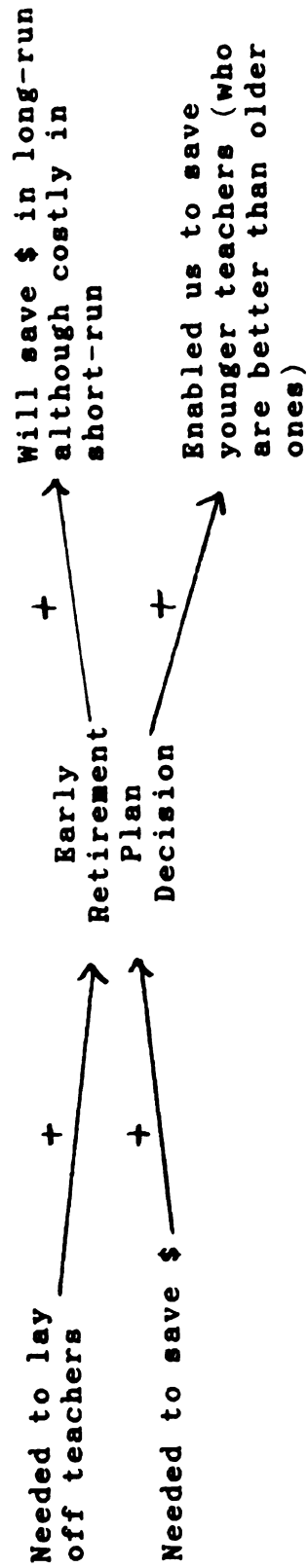


Figure A-6

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member F

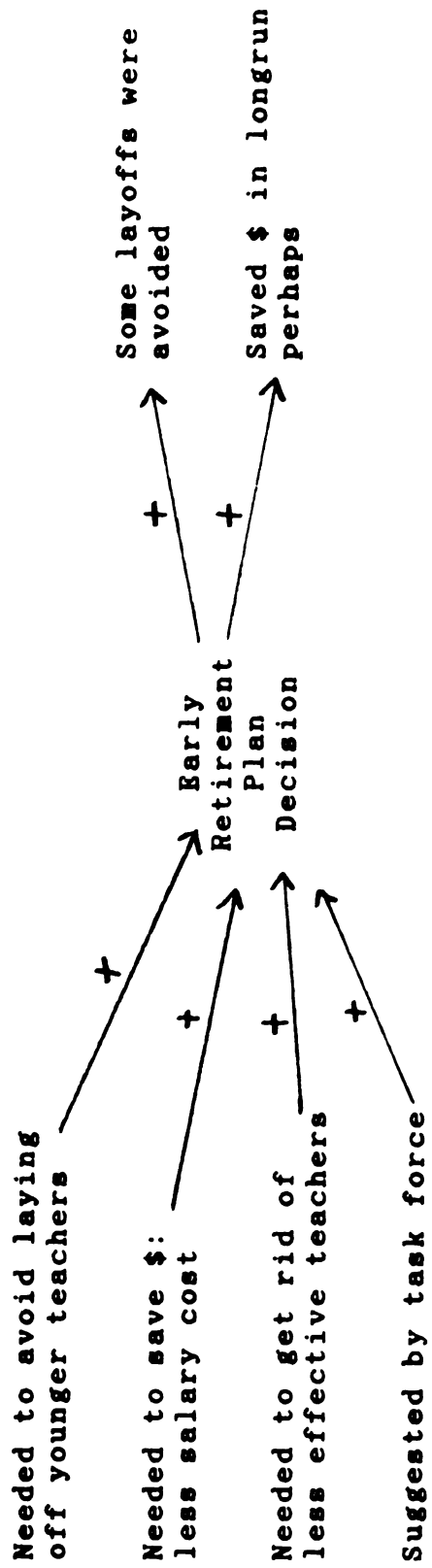


Figure A-7

Early Retirement Plan: Board Member G

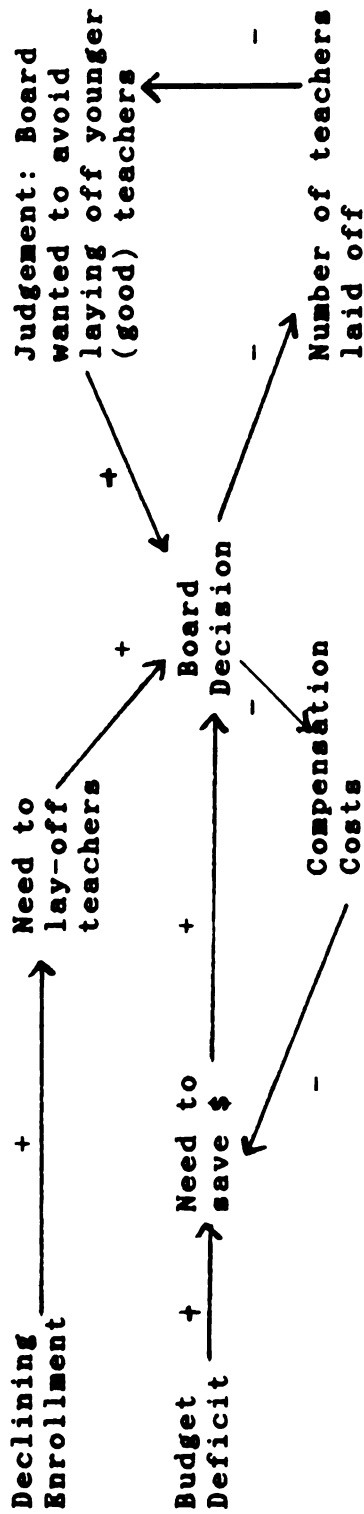


Figure A-8

Group Causal Map: Adopt Early Retirement Plan

Note. Three Board Members: saved money. Two: unsure. One: didn't save money.

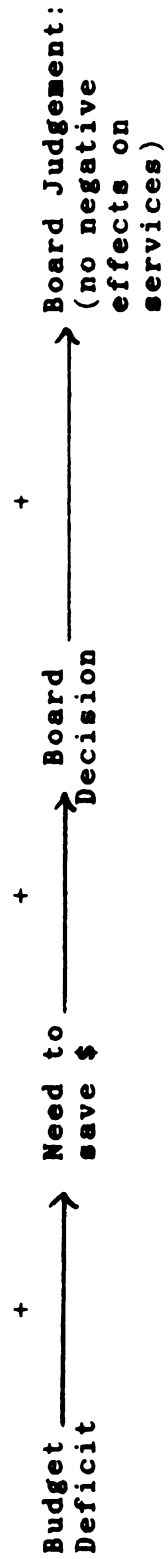


Figure A-9

Group Causal Map: Use Paraprofessional Librarians

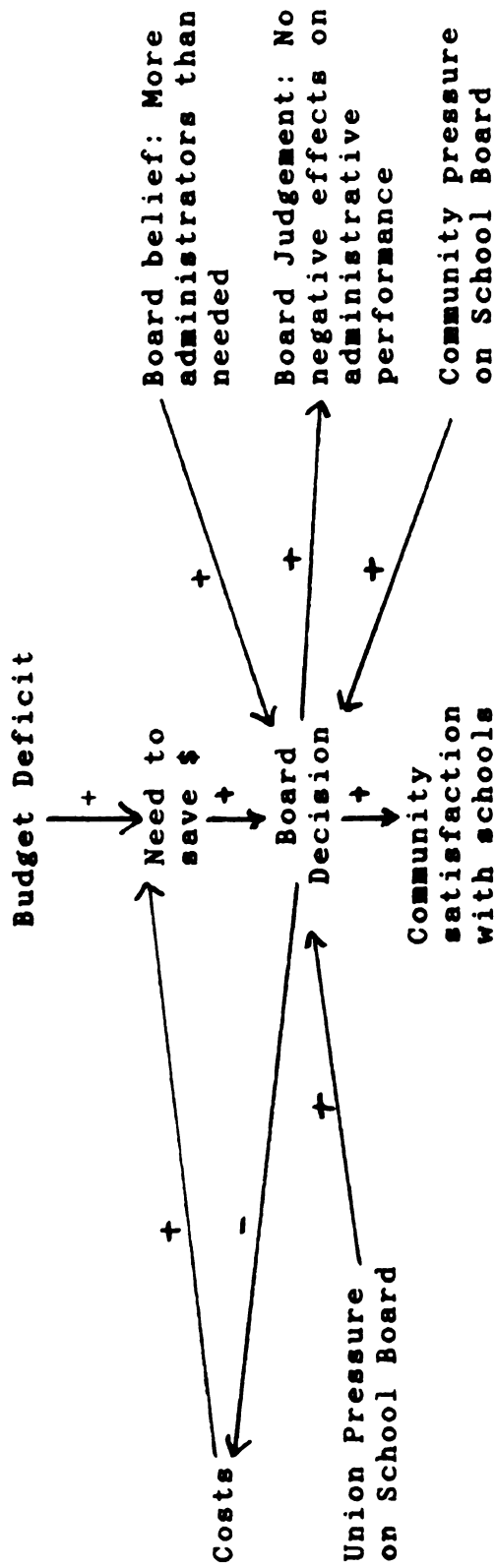


Figure A-10

Group Causal Map: Elimination of Four Administrative Positions

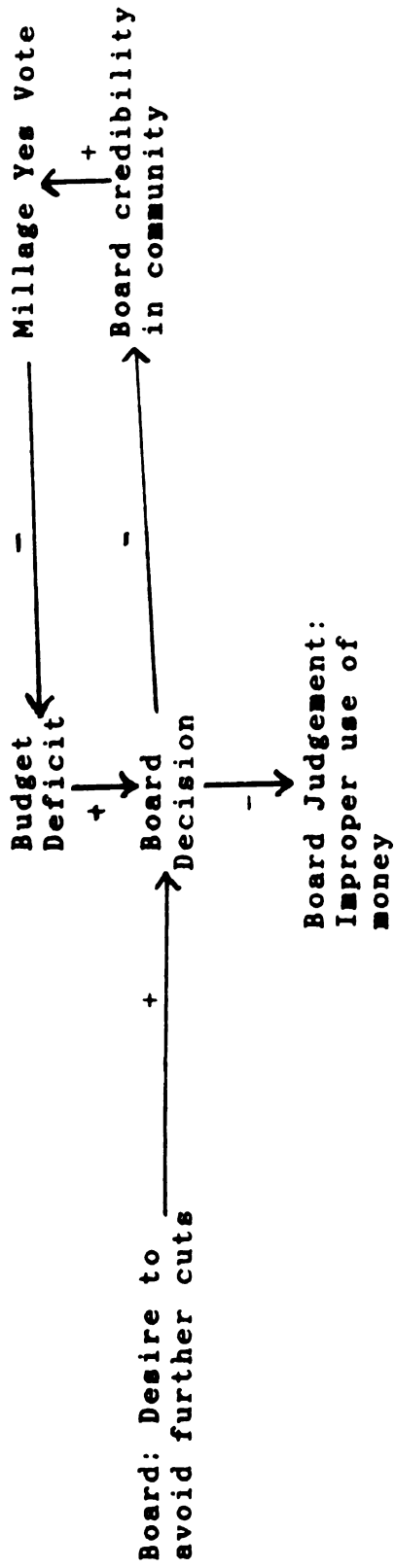


Figure A-11

Group Causal Map: Use One-half of "One Mill Monies" for Operating

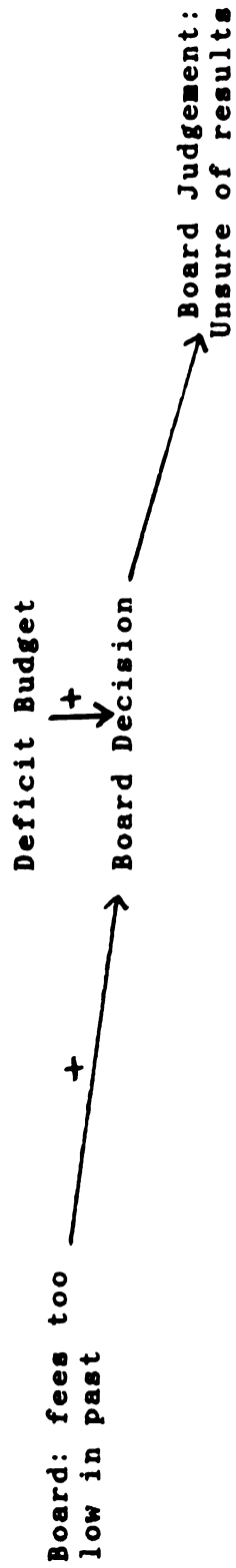


Figure A-12

Group Causal Map: Increase Building Rental Fees

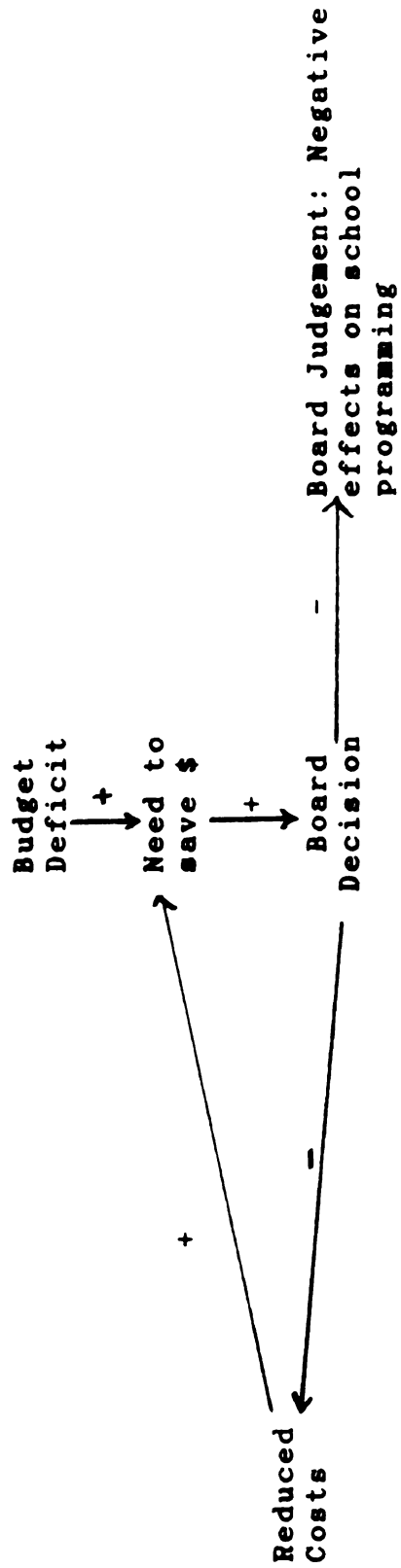


Figure 13

Group Causal Map: Shorten High School Day, Eliminating 14 Teachers

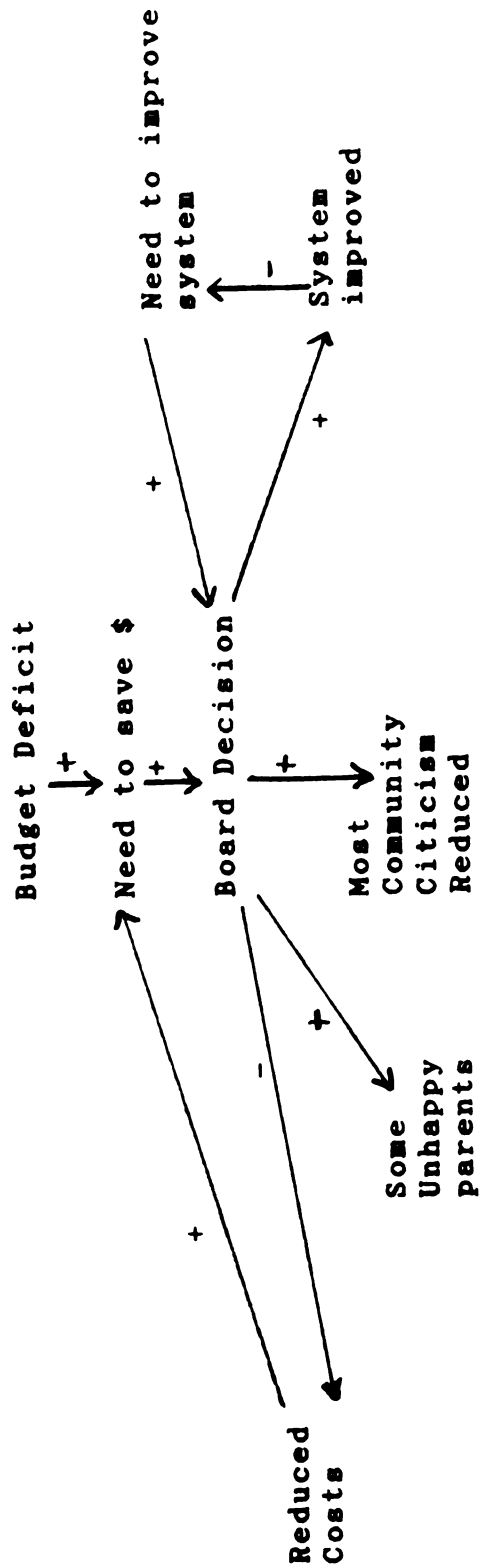


Figure A-14

Group Causal Map: Reorganize Bus Routes

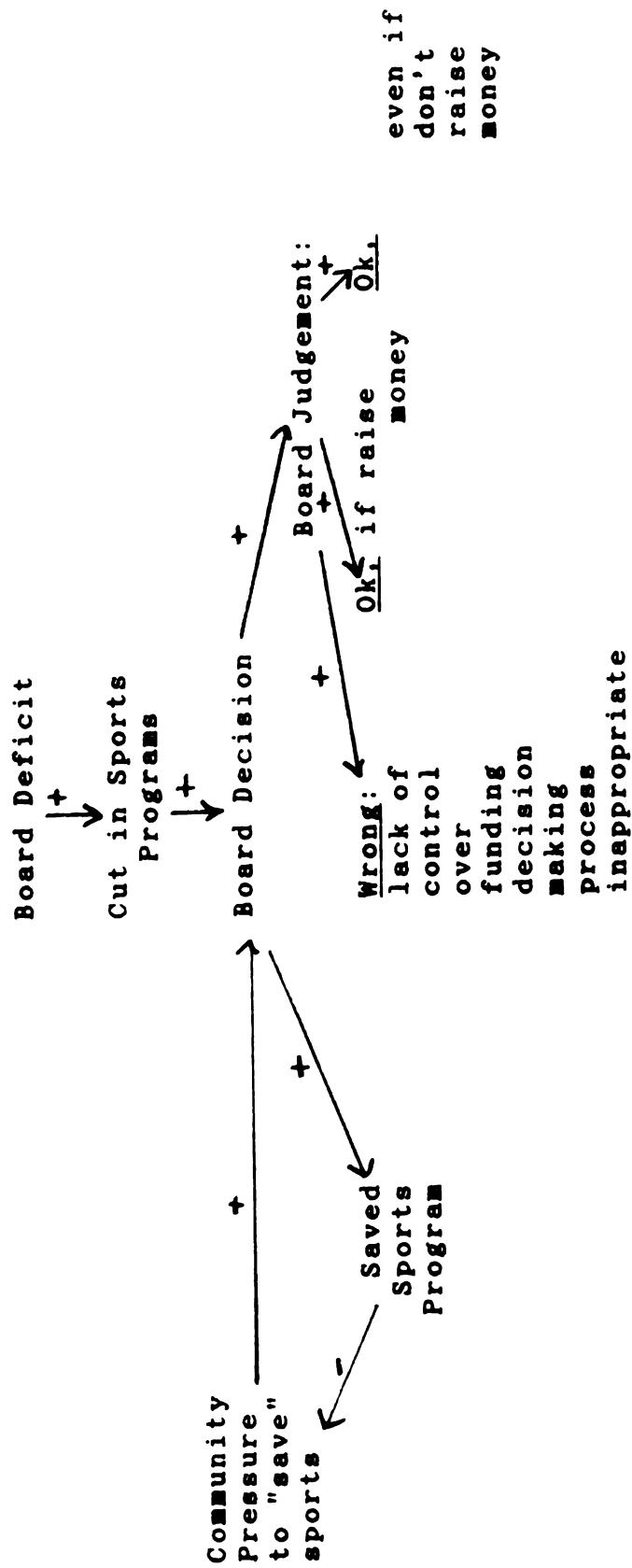


Figure A-15

Group Control Map: Accept IOU for Sports

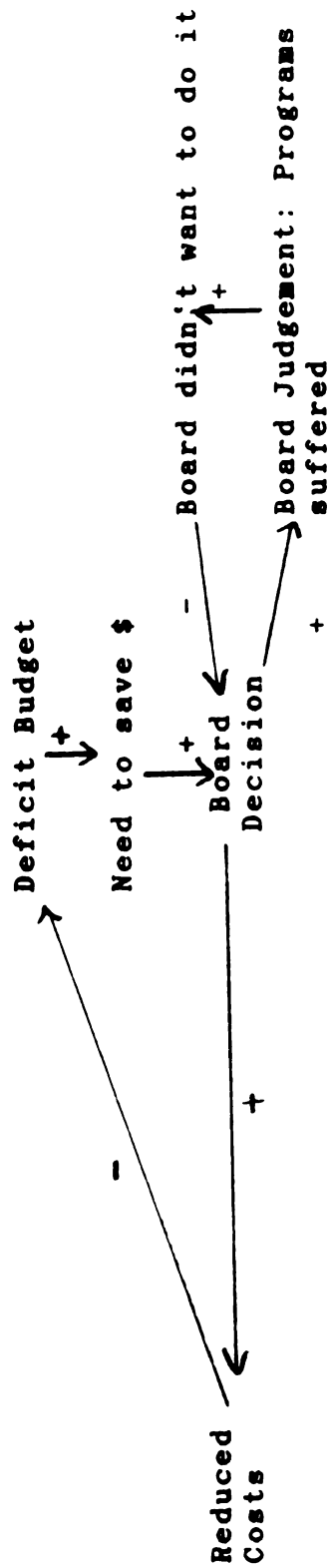


Figure A-16

Group Causal Map: Cutback in Art, Music and Physical Education, Elementary Level

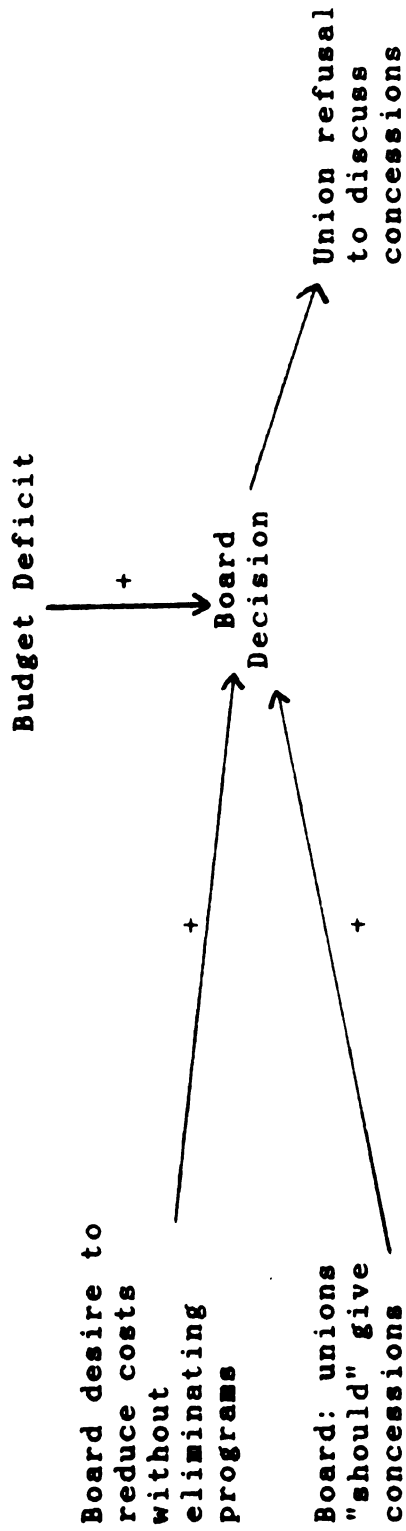


Figure A-17

Group Causal Map: Asking Staff for Concessions in Personnel Area

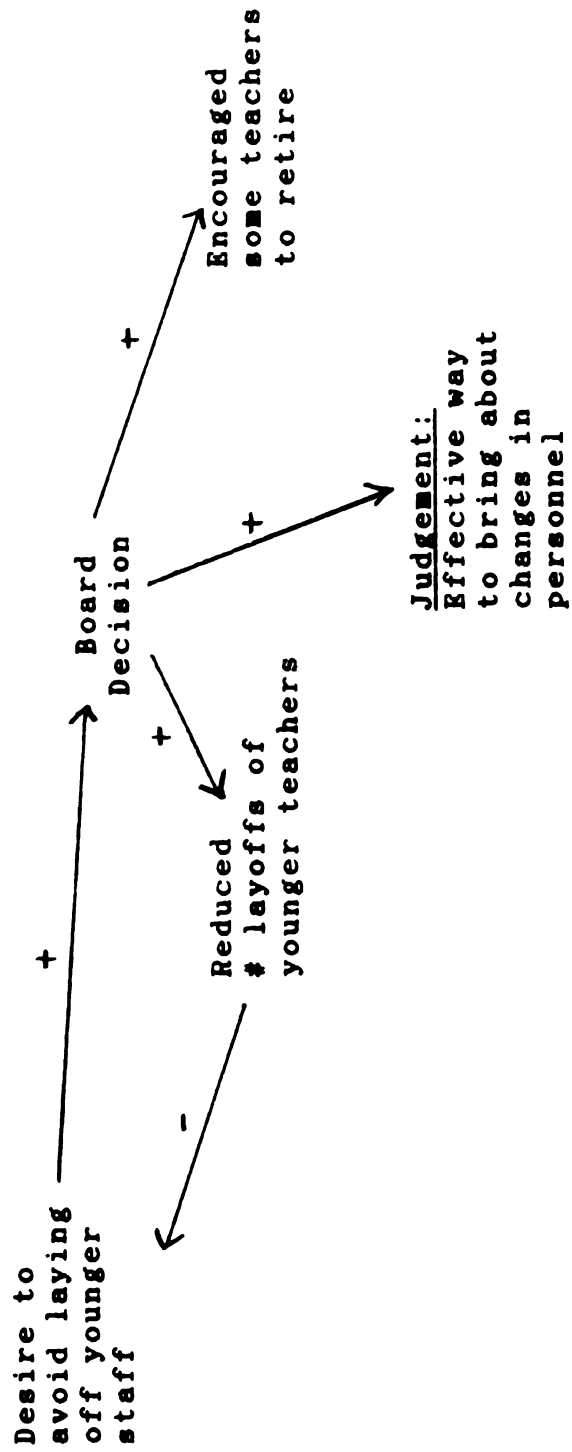


Figure A-18

Group Causal Map: Adopt Early Retirement Plan

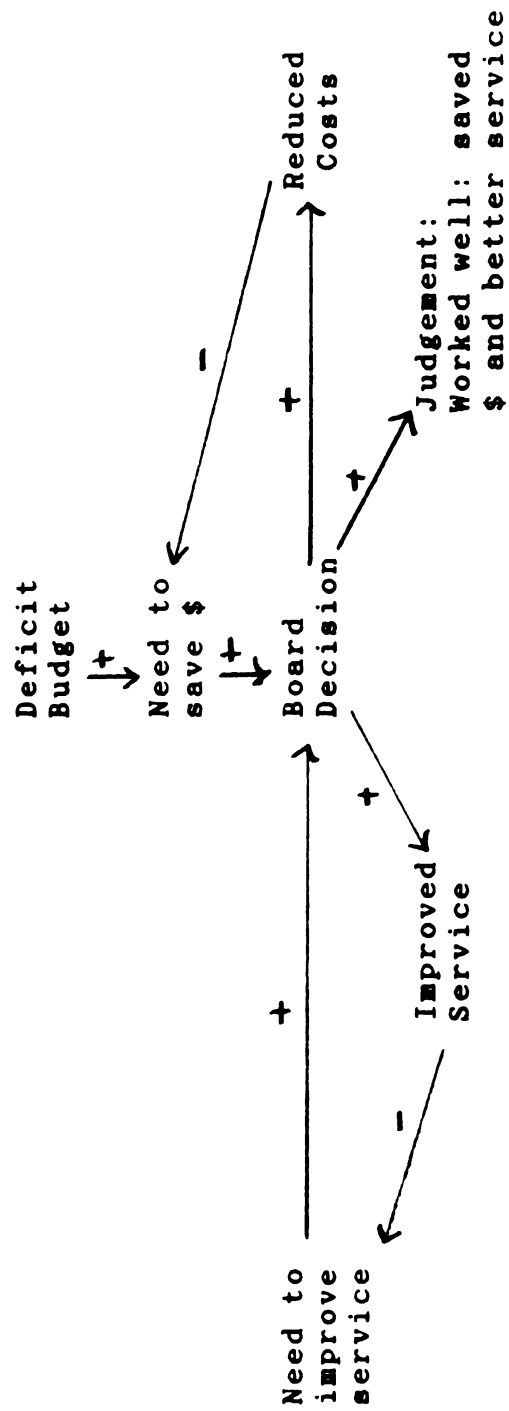


Figure A-19

Group Causal Map: Use Paraprofessionals

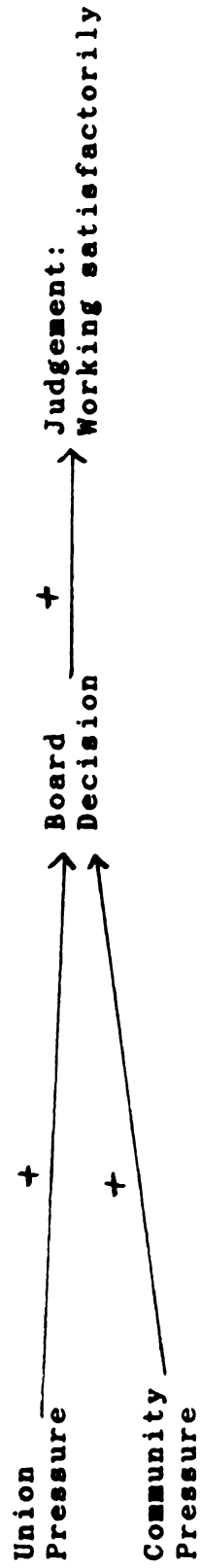


Figure A-20

Group Causal Map: Eliminate Four Administrative Positions

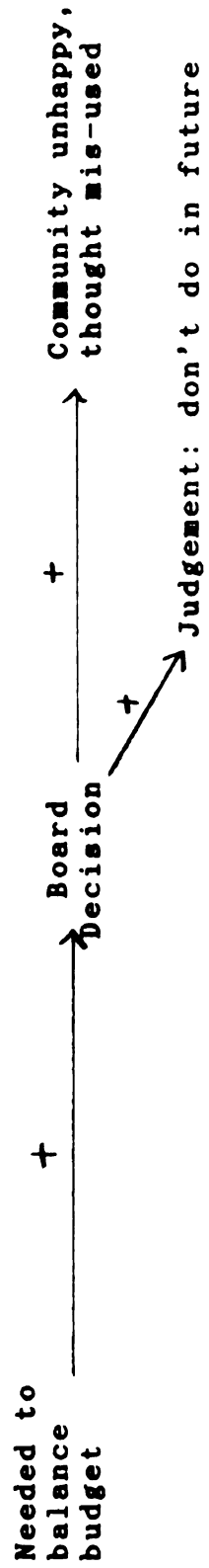


Figure A-21

Group Causal Map: Use of "One-mill Monies"

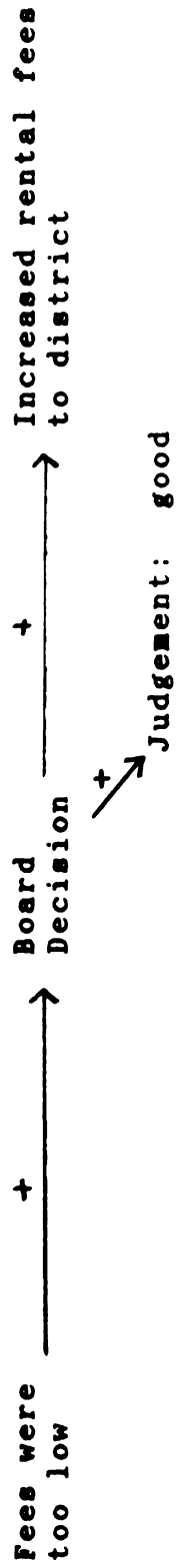


Figure A-22

Group Causal Map: Increase Building Rental Fees

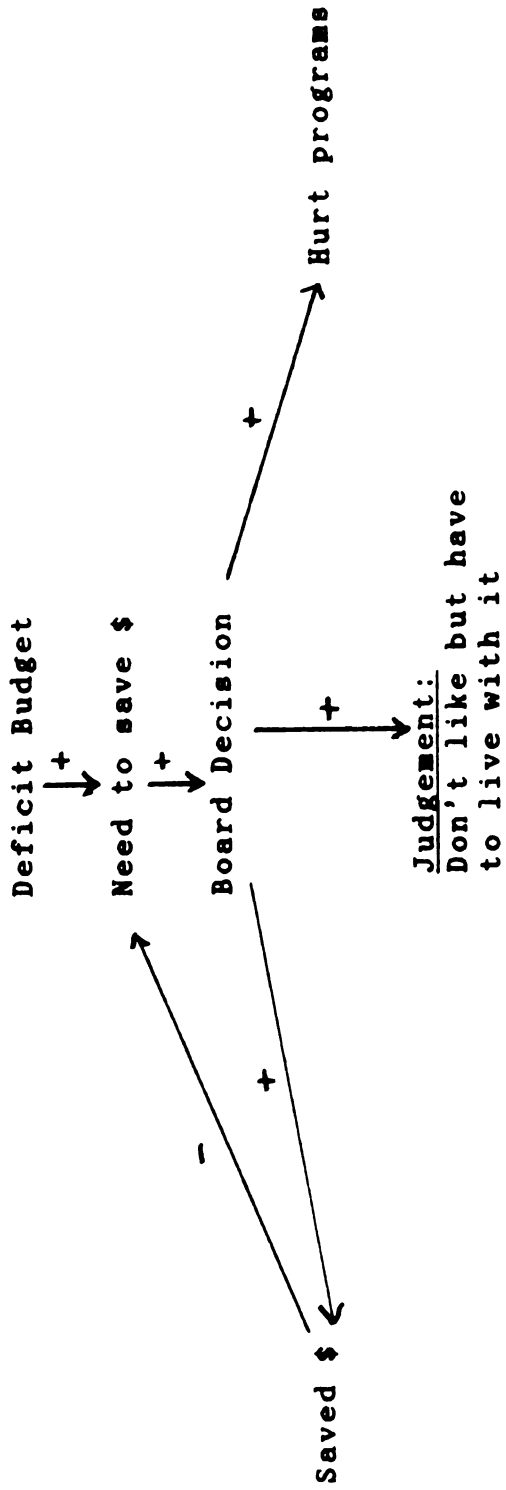


Figure A-23

Group Causal Map: Shorten High School Day

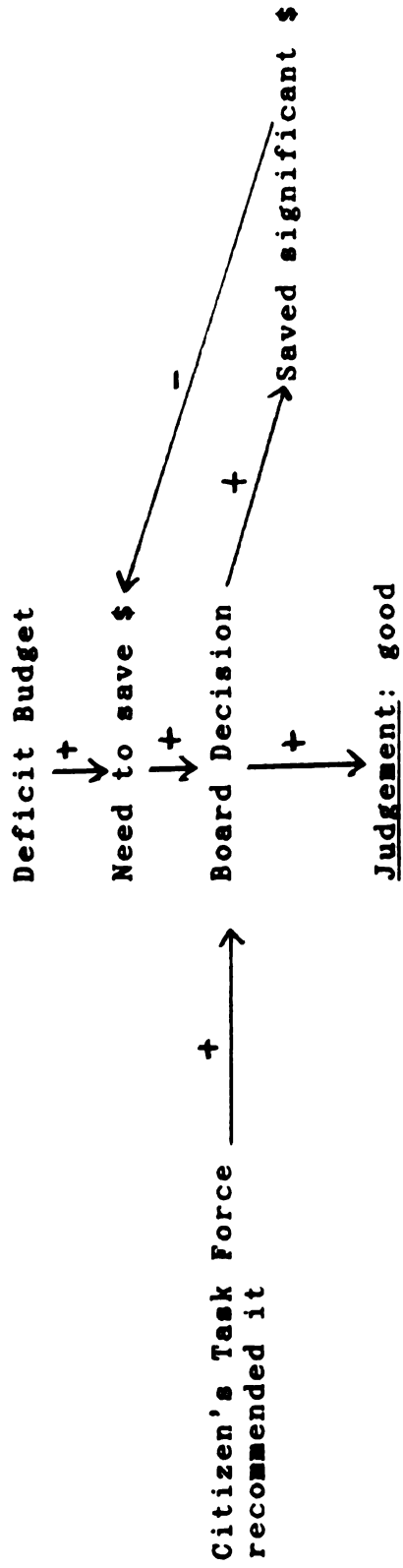


Figure A-24

Group Causal Map: Reorganizing Bus Routes

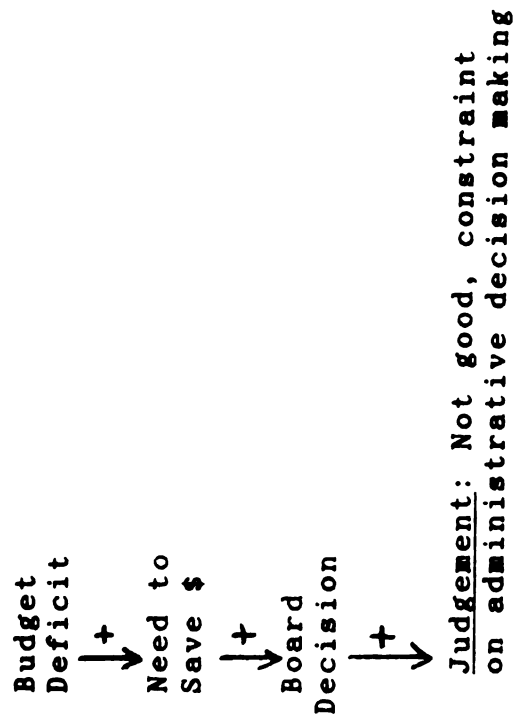


Figure A-25

Group Causal Map: Accept IOU for Sports

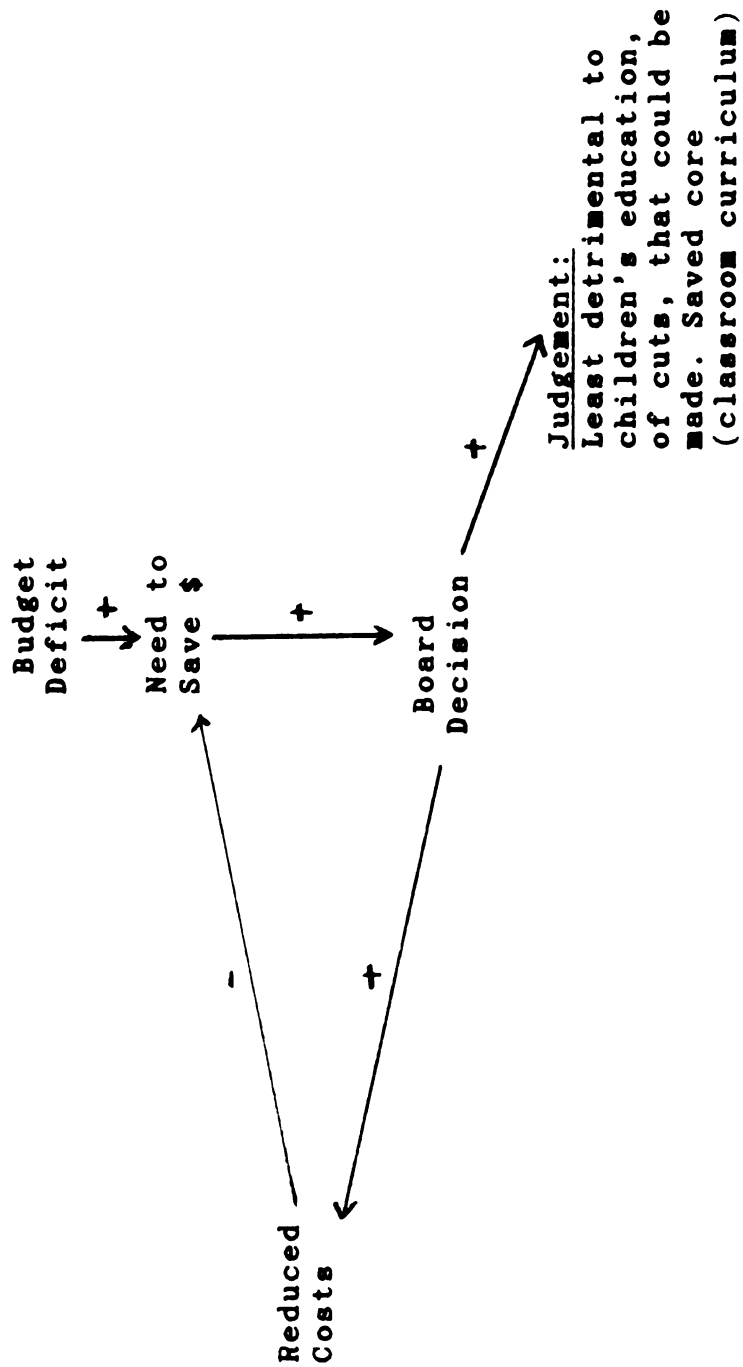


Figure A-26

Group Causal Map: Cuts in Elementary Art, Music and Physical Education

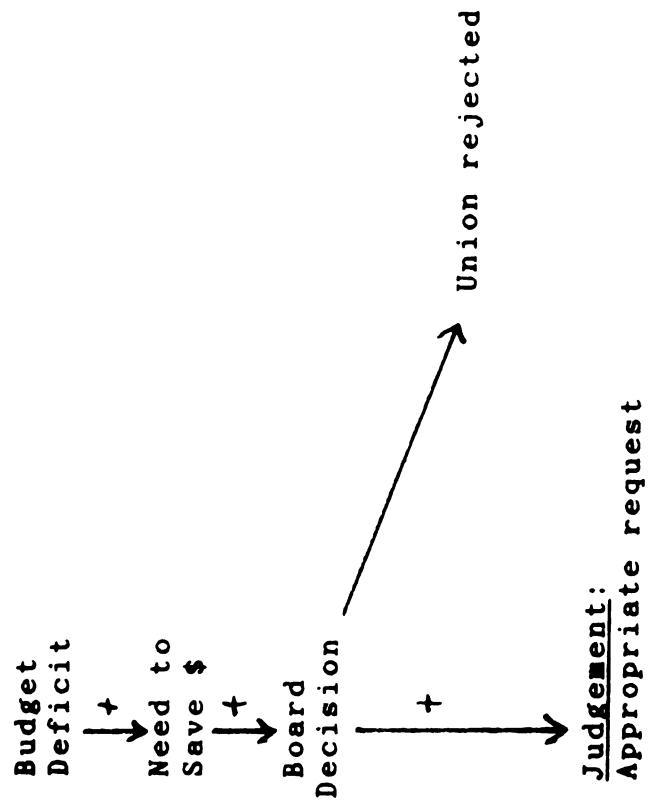


Figure A-27

Group Causal Map: Ask Staff for Concessions

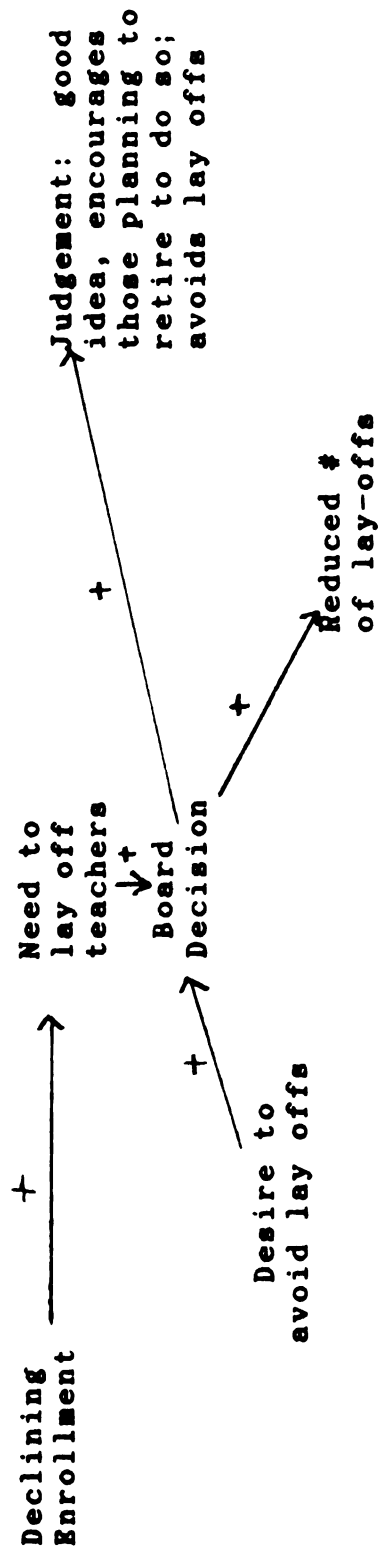


Figure A-28

Group Causal Map: Early Retirement Plan

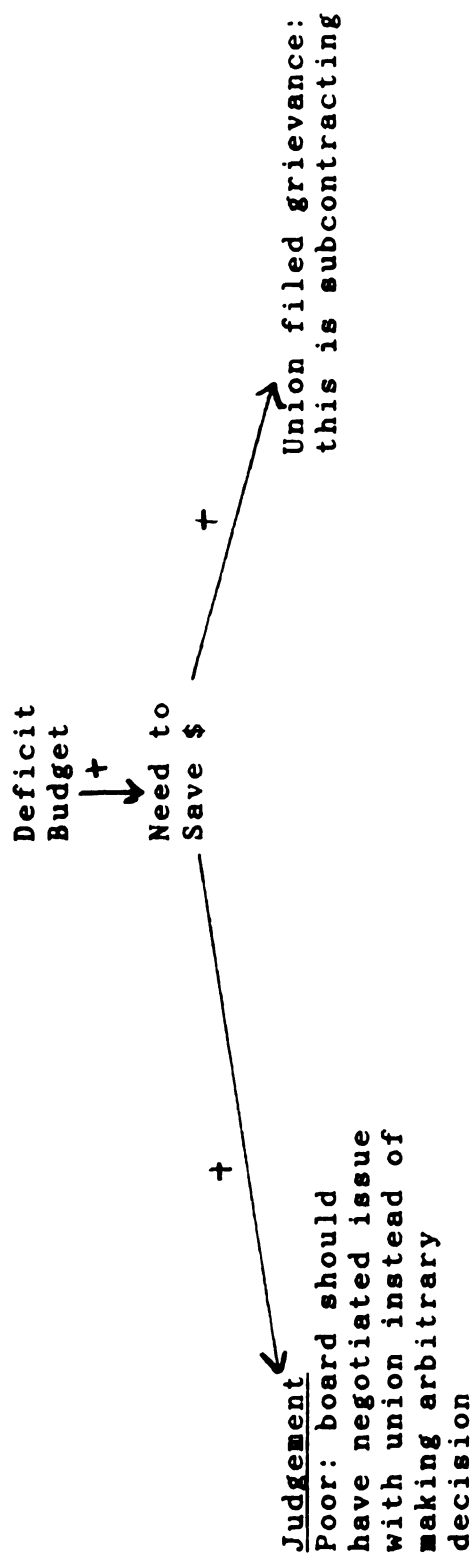


Figure A-29

Group Causal Map: Use of Paraprofessionals

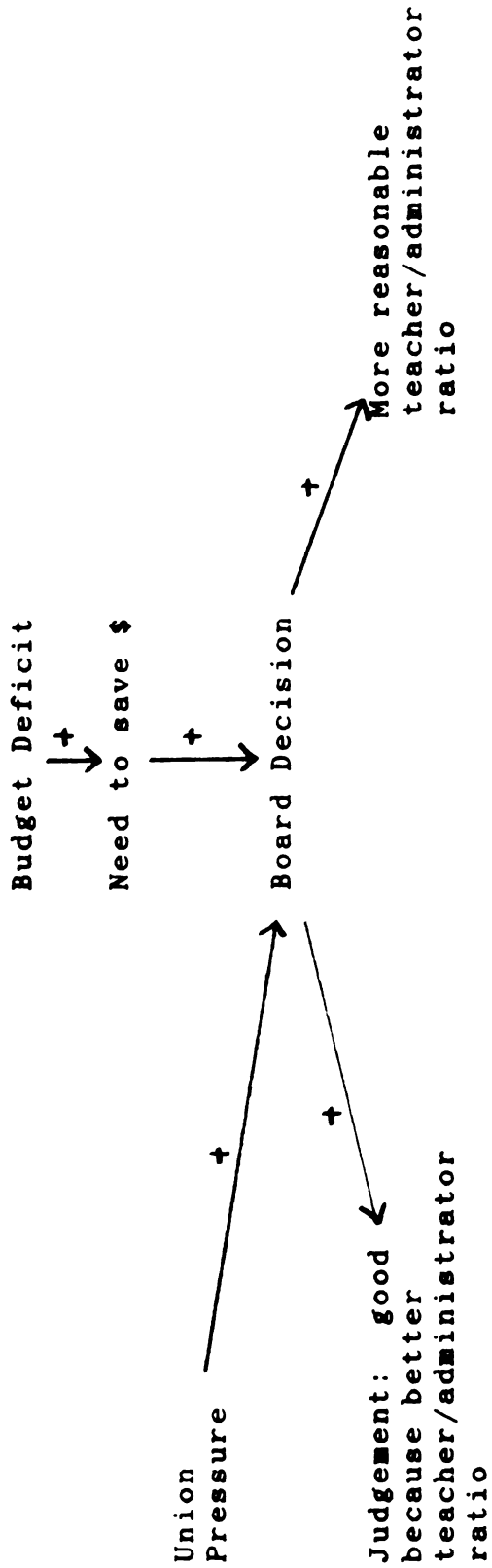


Figure A-30

Group Causal Map: Elimination of Four Administrative Positions

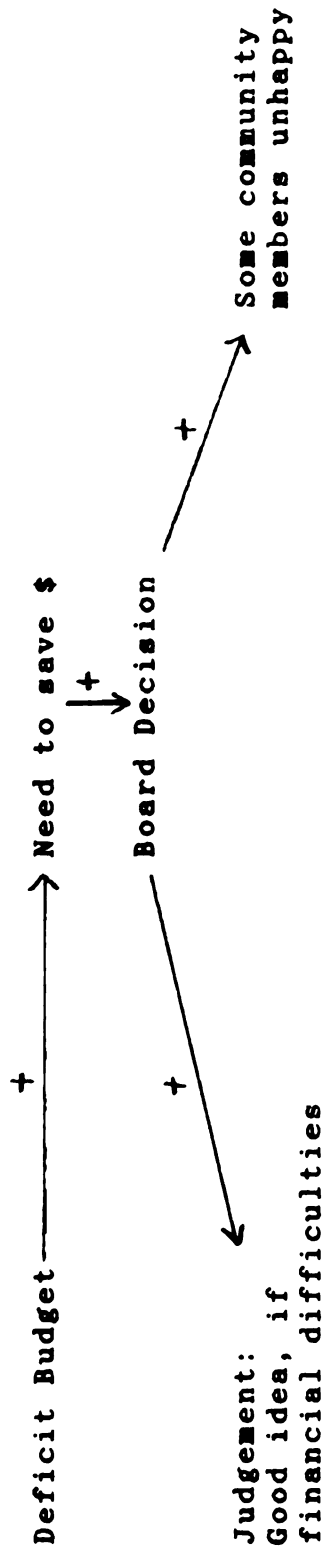


Figure A-31

Group Causal Map: Use of "One-mill-monies"

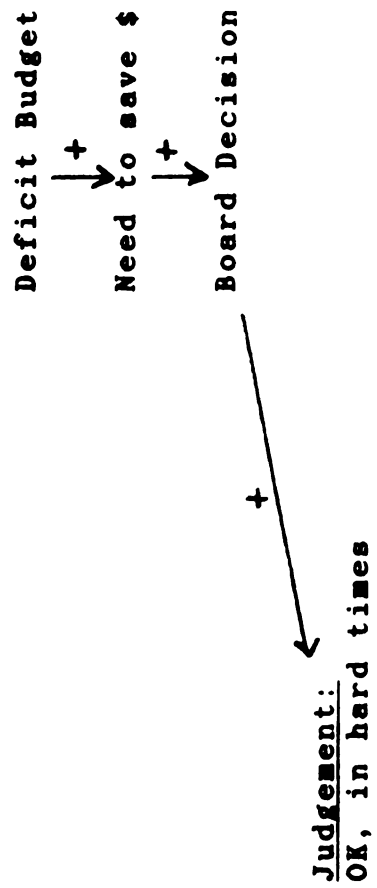


Figure A-32

Group Causal Map: Increase in Building Rental Fees

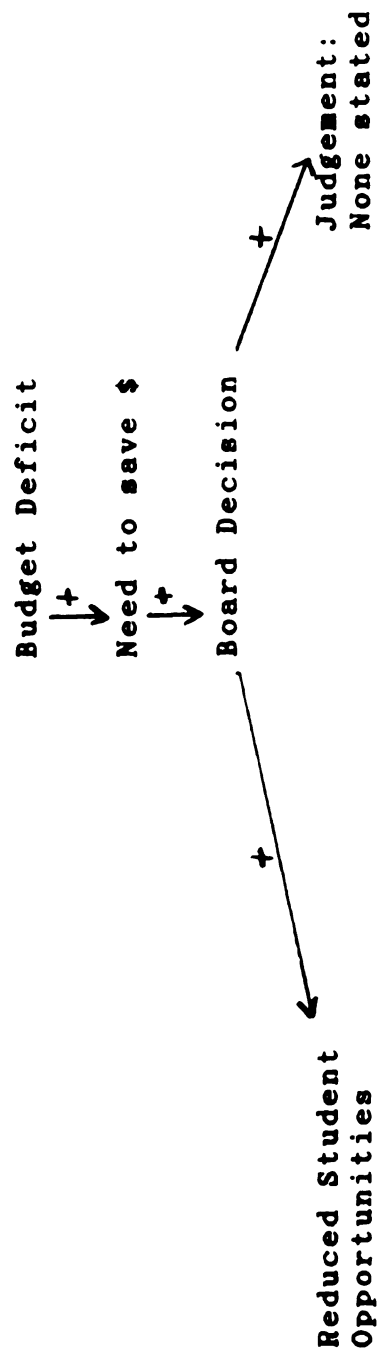


Figure A-33

Group Causal Map: Shorten High School Day

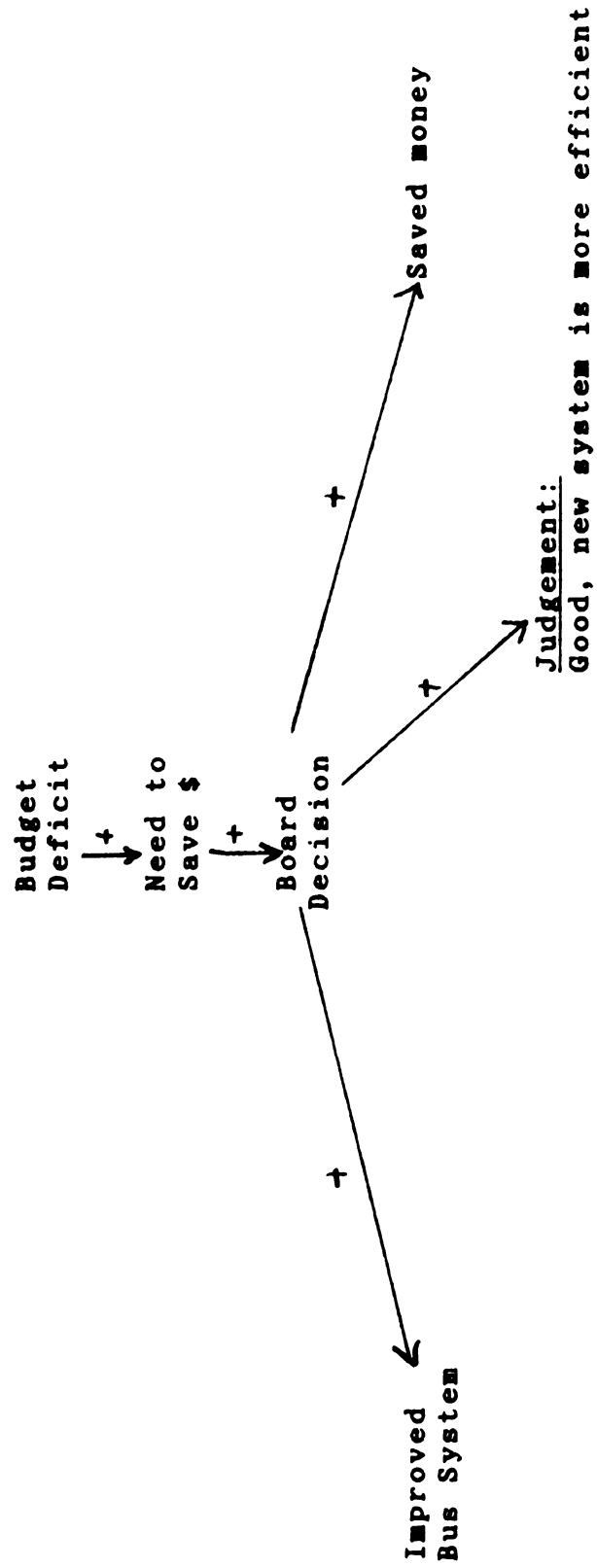


Figure A-34

Group Causal Map: Reorganization of Bus Routes

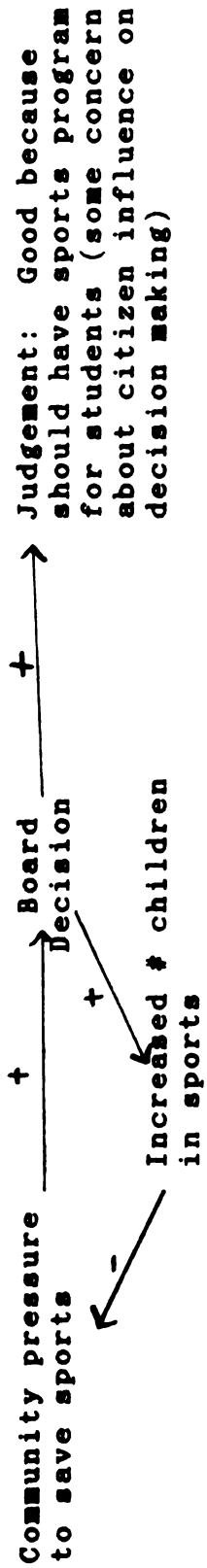


Figure A-35

Group Causal Map: Accept IOU for Sports

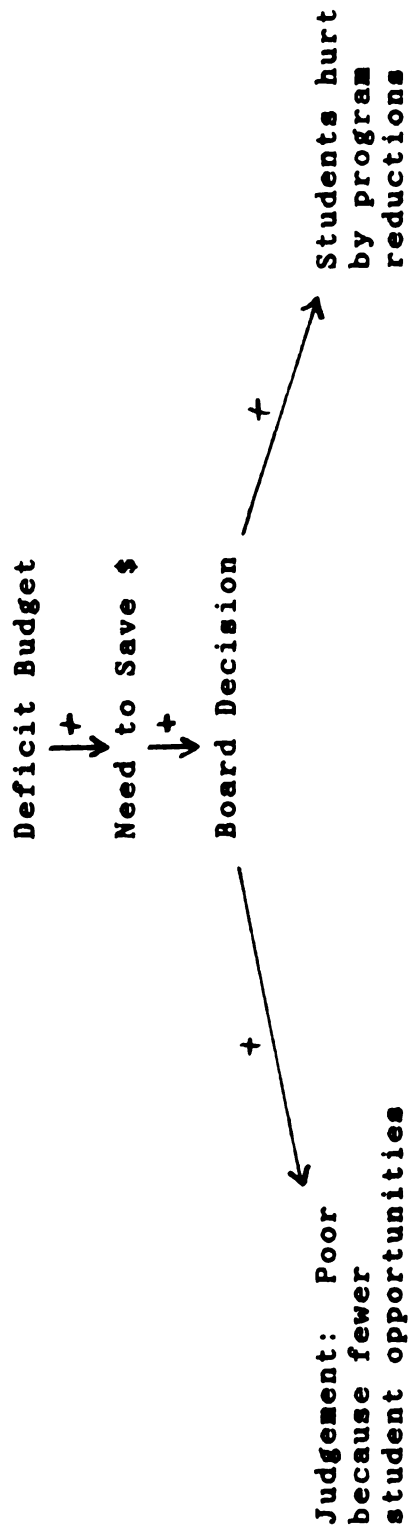


Figure A-36

Group Causal Map: Cutting Elementary Art, Music and Physical Education

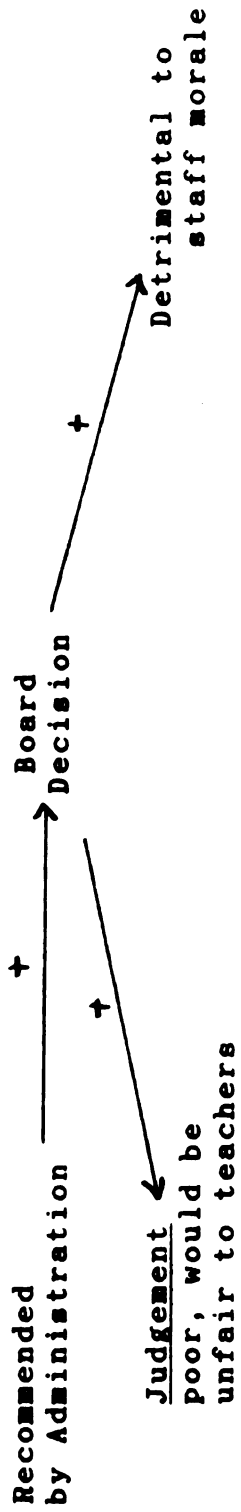


Figure A-37

Group Causal Map: Asking Staff to Make Concessions

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