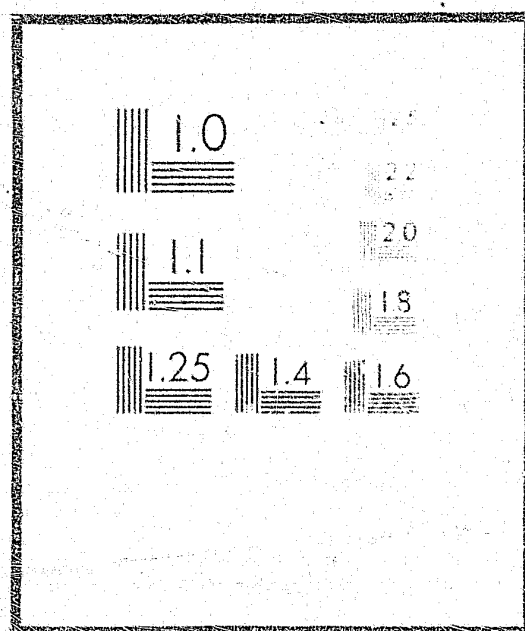


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FINAL EVALUATION REPORT  
on the  
ALTERNATIVE LEARNING PROGRAM OF THE CARLISLE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
(Pennsylvania Project #SC/75/C/4-a/6/326)

by  
Duane F. Stroman  
with the assistance of  
Thomas W. Woodrow  
January 31, 1977

## I. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF EVALUATION REPORT

### A. Goals and Activities of the Carlisle Alternative Learning Program

With a budget of \$58,500, the Carlisle Alternative Learning Program was begun in late January, 1976. To date a total of 73 students have been in the program, but only about 40 at any one time.

The overall goal of this program is to try to keep students with academic or social problems in school rather than see them drop out. It was hoped to enroll approximately 50 potential drop-outs in the program full-time and provide them with an alternative learning program that would individualize instruction. In comparison to a control group of vocational-technical underachievers in the class of 1974, some subsidiary goals for the ALP students were to reduce absenteeism by 25%, reduce school drop-outs by 25%, reduce court contacts by 25%, and "increase the student's positive feelings toward themselves, school and society."

To this end the Carlisle school system has hired three teachers to teach in the program. The school is housed in one-half of a large mansion located in Thornwald Park. In addition to the three faculty is a secretary and the assistance of mainstream teachers, guidance counselors and a variety of administrators from the Carlisle School system. These support personnel along with an advisory committee, including community representatives, work together with the faculty to set policies, goals and procedures for the program. They also assist in some instruction, counseling, and in a variety of other supportive roles.

To date the faculty has devised an alternative learning program that includes diagnosis of individual needs, academic and otherwise, and a curriculum marked by an emphasis upon remedial work in math and English and upon affective activities to enable the students to deal more effectively with their personal and social-emotional problems. The curricular program also allows for smaller classes, averaging from 8 to 15 in size, more individual teacher attention to students both inside and beyond the classroom, and more involvement in job and community contacts by students.

The evidence gathered indicates the program is serving those it intended to serve. Information on most of the students reveal that 58%

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had failed one or more grades prior to entry into the ALP, 47% had attended summer school at least once, 53% come from broken homes, over three-quarters are reading below grade level, substantial number of them had high absentee records, 17% have had contact with the probation office and 21% with the children's service of Cumberland County.

#### B. Evaluation Activities

The two evaluators have spent a total of ten days at the evaluation site gathering a wide variety of kinds of information on how the program is working and the results of the program. Information has been gathered on both administrative and curricular processes and goals. A number of recommendations were made in the interim report of November 30, 1976 on how to improve both administrative and curricular aspects of the program.

The information on the administration and curriculum and processes of the program has been gathered by talking to many people involved in various aspects of the program, reviewing memoranda and attending classes and by observation.

Much information has been gathered about the students in the program as well as about a control group (45 students in the class of 1974) and information from a ninth grade contemporary control group (as regards self-esteem). Student information has been gathered on academic records and progress, absenteeism and dropping-out behavior, student contacts with the county Probation Office and Office of Children's Services, and how students feel about themselves, school and society. This information has been gathered from school and social agency records, tests and questionnaires administered to students, observation and interviews with teachers, administrators, guidance counselors, students, parents and social agency personnel.

#### C. Findings and Recommendations

Most of the evidence is supportive that the program is serving the students it intended to serve, that the program is working fairly well although room for improvement exists and that the goals of the program are being reached.

Let me summarize some major findings from the study. (1) Students are making academic progress (usually remedial) in math and reading skills, but not as fast in the latter as is desirable. On the other hand, much faster progress may not be possible, but remains an open question. (2) No changes were revealed in the affective component of attitudes as measured by the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, but the time between pre and post-test scores was short and this inventory may not be the best measure of attitudinal change. On the other hand, interviews with a sample of students, and parents, as well as with teachers and social agency personnel, does show positive gains for many students in their affective attitudes and behavior. (3) Absenteeism was reduced 25% in the 1975-76 year among ALP students and 12.5% so far in the 1976-77 academic year. However, for the fifteen students with the worst attendance records (missing 10% or more of school) before entering the ALP, their absentee rates were reduced 36%. (4) Preliminary evidence by grade level indicates that the drop-out rate is down, but it is too early to conclude that these will hold true over time. (5) Institutional contacts for the ALP students are presently about the same and will probably go higher than for the 1974 control group. But the evaluator questions the comparability of the control and ALP groups.

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(6) Preliminary benefit-cost analysis suggests that the dollar costs of the program will be returned, on the average, to individuals, and/or to government in terms of higher tax revenues. But early and therefore incomplete data and the availability of alternative methods of calculating cost-benefit ratios suggests that this information is rather inconclusive at this point in time. Furthermore, there are limits on cost-benefit analysis in that it does not measure important but non-dollar benefits.

The practical recommendations are hard to summarize inasmuch as they involve details about the administration and curricular operation of the program. Generally, they suggest that the administrative and curricular operation of the program be tightened up by means of more coordination, cooperation, publicity, written goals and procedures as regards student selection and expulsion and curriculum objectives, behaviorally oriented course syllabi in both cognitive and affective areas, greater provision for continuing education for the ALP staff, a facility change if fiscally feasible, enrollment limitation of the program to ninth and tenth graders, a review of the composition and role of the advisory committee, greater staff input in budget building, greater coordination with mainstream curricular programs, suggested changes in teaching assignments and changes in course titles, review the quantity of class work and home work required-especially in reading and writing, and the need to inspect alternative routes to improving counseling and reading programs within existing fiscal constraints.

In light of the successes of the program, the strong commitment of the program by both the staff and administration, and the improvements in the second year of the program in comparison to the first year, the evaluator recommends refunding of the program.

## II. PROJECT ACTIVITIES

### A. Goals of the Carlisle Alternative Learning Program

The original overall goal of the project as stated in the application for funding was to develop an alternative educational program for retaining in school fifty ninth grade students whose current behavior patterns and academic deficiencies indicate they might otherwise drop out of school. An earlier study of such children in the class of 1974 indicated that 61% of such behavioral/academic problem students had in fact dropped out between ninth grade and the point of graduation.

This overall goal was to be achieved through three means: (1) by developing individualized programs to accommodate varying learning styles, (2) by developing optional ways for the target population to relate to teachers and other significant adults and (3) by addressing the personal and social problems of such students that may directly and/or indirectly interfere with their ability and desire to learn.

A second major goal of the project was to establish positive feelings of self-worth and positive courses of action among the target population that will assist in reducing the number of incarcerations and other court related contacts of the target population.

The original proposal also listed five performance objectives:

1. The staff, utilizing various existing support personnel, were to diagnose the existing academic and social deficiencies and needs of the target population and prescribe individual and group programs designed to better meet the needs of students involved in the program.
2. Reduce absenteeism of the target population by 25% in comparison to the previous year's attendance record.
3. Increase target students positive feelings toward themselves, school and society.
4. Reduce the drop-out rate of the target population by 25% in comparison to the drop out rate of the class of 1974. (The 1974 class rate was believed to be 61%, but a review of the records showed it to be 42.5% or 19 out of 45)
5. Reduce the institutionalization rate of the target population by 25% in comparison to the 16% institutionalization rate of the class of 1974, the control group.

In addition to the two major goals and the five performance objectives of the program, the original application proposal contained four implementation objectives which are described in the section on implementation objectives and activities.

#### B. Implementation Objectives and Activities

In this section of the report we shall list the four implementation objectives and following each describe the activities which have been undertaken to carry out those objectives.

1. "The Carlisle Area School District shall secure, maintain and equip an appropriate facility for the operation of the Alternative Learning Program."

A facility on the Thornwood Park estate off of the conjunction of College Street and Walnut-Bottom Road has been rented and equipped with appropriate school furniture. The facility is shared with the Carlisle Counseling Center. While the facility is minimally appropriate, it lacks adequate heating, lighting and ventilation. It lacks appropriate physical education and scientific laboratory facilities. Some of the classrooms are quite small although usually large enough for the relatively small classes. And it is located only a few blocks from a shopping center, a temptation for students. On the other hand, available alternative locations and their costs is not known.

2. "Shall screen, employ and provide supportive systems for those properly certified and competent instructors to organize and provide a meaningful educational program for the target population."
3. "The Carlisle Area School District shall provide all existing support personnel for the effective operation of the Alternative Learning Program."

The Carlisle School District chose three competent teachers for the program: Lester Wallace, Bob Herncane and Michael Rothschild. Respectively their backgrounds are in social studies, math and science and English. Preceding the beginning of the program in January 1976 they had some released time to develop the program. Beginning in the fall of 1976 they also had the assistance of a secretary to answer the telephone, type, run off dittos, maintain absentee records, do filing, etc. These three teachers have had support from Carlisle School District personnel in developing the program. As time permits they coordinate their academic and counseling efforts with the Director of Pupil Personnel Services,



the Home-School Visitor, school psychologists, guidance counselors, other teachers (gym, music and art) from the Intermediate High School (grades 9 and 10), the Program Advisory Committee, and school administrators. While there have been the expected problems of developing and publicizing the program, generally the program is evolving into a fairly smoothly functioning program.

The program for the 1975-76 academic year opened January 27, 1976 and closed June 4, 1976. The program for the 1976-77 year opened September 13, and at the end of the first twelve-week cycle on December 3, students may transfer into or out of the program.

Classes in both years generally followed the program outlined in the Carlisle ALP Weekly Schedule. The staff, administration and the ALP Advisory Committee have worked out grading policies, curriculum and rules for the operation of the ALP.

Carlisle ALP Weekly Schedule

	M	T	W	Th	F
8:10-8:20		CHECK-IN			
8:25-9:20	Gym @	Eng. 2** Math 2* Family 1***	Gym @	P R G	Eng. 2** Math 2* Family 1***
9:25-10:20	Math 1* Eng. 1*** Science 1**	Family 2*** Drug Ed. 2**	Math 1* Eng. 1*** Science 1**	J E	Family 2*** Drug Ed. 2**
10:25-11:15	Science 2** Eng. 3*** Reading 1*	Reading 2* Geogr. 2***	Science 2** Eng. 3*** Reading 1*	C T	Reading 2* Geogr. 2***
11:20-12:00	STUDY HALL; remedial help, make-up work, counseling				
12:05-12:50		LUNCH			
12:35-1:25	Drug Ed. 1** Values * Eng. 5***	Eng. 4**	Drug Ed. 1** Values * Eng. 5***	D A Y	Eng. 4** Art @
1:30-2:20	Science 3** Math 3*	Music @	Science 3** Math 3*	* ** ***	Art @

Teachers: 3 - Teachers from IHS  
 \* - Bob Hearnane  
 \*\* - Mike Rothschild  
 \*\*\* - Lester Wallace

4. "The school staff shall identify fifty students within the ninth grade who are demonstrating anti-social and/or disruptive behavior patterns as indicated by low academic achievement, absenteeism, truancy, and discipline problems. This selection process shall include absenteeism record, truancy record, academic progress record and subjective evaluations by teachers, counselors, and administrators. Final involvement in the program will be based upon student and parental consent for enrollment."

This implementation objective really consists of three parts: (1) fifty students, (2) the selection criteria and process, and (3) parental and student consent. As far as the evaluator knows, the third factor, parental and student consent has always been obtained and in writing.

To date there has always been somewhat fewer than fifty students in the program at any point in time. In the period from 1-27-76 to 6-4-76 a total of forty three students were in the program, most for sixty days, a few for seventy and a few for thirty five or less. In the fall cycle of 1976, 9-13 to 12-3, there were 34 students in the program, 13 of whom were in the program the previous year. Most of the students (19) were from the ninth grade, but 2 were eighth graders and 13 from the tenth grade. Beginning with the second cycle on December 3, 1976, 7 new students came into the program while 6 either moved back into the mainstream program or moved to another school district. However, this small deficiency between the goal of serving fifty students and only serving around 35-45 can partly be explained by the need for parental and student consent, the difficulty of publicizing the program, the uncertainty of funding for it, and staff/administration questions as to whether the goal of 50 students was realistic in light of the nature of the program and the students involved in it.

This question brings us to the difficult area of criteria for student selection and the selection process. While there seems to be considerable consensus among the staff, advisory committee and administration on the type of student to be served, the staff has felt it cannot handle students with "major discipline problems" or with "severe psychological problems." Such students are seen as either too disruptive

even for classes of 7-15 students or beyond the helping skills of the teachers. And the staff may be right here. For example, the Middle Earth School for truant youngsters with character disorders operating at the Norristown State Hospitals has a staff-student ratio of about 1 to 3<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the staff of the ALP may not be able to handle more severe problems without either reducing numbers of students or increasing staff size. The alternative may be to continue to educate those borderline students with an emphasis on affective education that will enable them to return to the mainstream program. But to mix the borderline students with those who are severely disturbed may jeopardize the entire program while doing little for the most disruptive or disturbed. In any case, some clarification needs to be made on the types of students to be served by the program. The process of selecting students involves having them either volunteer for the program and/or be nominated by teachers and guidance counselors. From this list of students, records are reviewed (although this might be done more thoroughly) and students interviewed by the staff to determine their motivation and appropriateness for inclusion in the program. Students may voluntarily return to the mainstream program, usually at the end of a twelve week cycle, or be returned by the staff when they feel the student is too disruptive and/or when they feel they have completed their task with him. While considerable emphasis is placed upon improving a student's self image and relationships to adults, academic improvement is also attended to and encouraged by small classes, student involvement in the program and extensive attention to each student.

### III. EVALUATION ACTIVITIES

#### A. Nature, Extent and Timing of Evaluation Activities

Duane Stroman has visited the Carlisle Alternative Learning Program on September 3, 17, 29, October 27, December 15 and January 12 to familiarize himself with the program and the people involved in it and to gather information by a variety of means that is included in this report. Both Duane Stroman and Thomas Woodrow visited the ALP on November 22 and 23 to intensively study the administrative and instructional processes of the

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1. Frank J. Schmauk, "Middle Earth School Half Term Report" 3-4, 1974 (Mimeo); "Middle Earth School End of Term Report", July, 1974 (Mimeo); "Middle Earth School End of Term Report," July, 1975.



program and to give extensive feedback to the staff and administrators involved in the program on most of the recommendations included in the interim report.

Evaluation activities to date have included:

1. The development of a more detailed evaluation design once we were familiar with the project which has been shared with the Governor's Justice Commission, the Carlisle school administration and the ALP teaching staff.
2. Interviews with 12 ALP students on September 29 and reinterviews with 11 of them on January 12.
3. The development of open-ended interview schedules and their use in interviewing teachers, guidance counselors, school psychologist and school administrators on November 22 and 23.
4. The administration and scoring of the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory on September 21, 1976 to a ninth grade control group and to ALP enrollees and to the same students again on January 10, 1977.
5. The collection of data on the court contacts and juvenile probation or children services contacts for both the 1974 control group and ALP enrollees during the 1975-76 and 1976-77 academic years. Mr. Wes James, Coordinator of Pupil Personnel Services, Mr. Ken Balze of the Cumberland County Office of Probation and Parole and Mrs. Barbara Wishmeyer of the Cumberland County Office of Children's Services have all put in many hours and been most cooperative in reviewing agency records and supplying needed information.
6. Students involved in the ALP program from its inception through the first cycle ending December 3, 1976 have had their school records reviewed when available to gain information on truancy, absenteeism, academic performance and home life.
7. Several classes have been observed on November 22 and 23 by both Thomas Woodrow and Duane Stroman.
8. The facility was inspected.
9. A meeting of the ALP Advisory Committee was visited on September 29.
10. Duane Stroman has also read many scholarly and popular articles on the operation and evaluation of various types of Alternative Learning Programs.
11. We have studied a number of internal memoranda, evaluations and committee reports concerning the operation of the ALP and each time the ALP was visited contact was made with teachers and various administrators to

determine program changes and progress.

12. Information has been collected on earnings and taxes on the same by various levels of educational attainment in order to be able to complete the cost benefit study.
13. A sample of nine parents were interviewed by telephone on January 12, 1977.

#### B. Data Bases for Evaluation

A complex mix of data bases have been used in this evaluation: observation, unstructured discussions with staff and administrators, reading and math tests (the latter locally developed), the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, absentee records, juvenile contacts with children's agencies, probation and parole office information on the nature of juvenile contacts, open ended interviews with students, parents, teachers and many others, information on earnings and taxes by level of education, and dropout rates. These various types of information have a variety of sources with varying degrees of reliability and validity. These will be cited later in the report when the results of the project are given.

#### C. Project Feedback and Modifications

On November 22 and 23 the project evaluators met with teachers, students, guidance counselors, support personnel and administrators to review the administrative and educational processes of the project. On November 23 feedback was given to the staff and most of this verbal feedback was included in the recommendations listed in the Interim Evaluation Report dated November 30, 1976. We will discuss modifications made or under review under the section on Recommendations.

### IV. RESULTS OF THE PROJECT

The results of the project will be analyzed under six headings. Since the ultimate goals of the project were to change students in some way, five of the headings try to analyze what is happening to students in the program. The first heading however looks at the nature of the students served as well as the numbers.

#### A. The Nature and Number of Students Served

The program was designed as an alternative to the regular program to reach those students who were not doing well academically and/or whose behavior was marked by absenteeism, social problems at school and/or problems with the law.

In order to find out about these students the evaluator looked at the school records of most of the students who have been in the program since

it began. He also interviewed a sample of them at the beginning of the program and reinterviewed the same students on January 12, 1977. He interviewed a sample of their parents, discussed the nature of the students with teachers, guidance counselors and administrators. Finally, information was obtained from or through Barbara Wishmeyer about contacts these children had with the Cumberland County Office of Children's Services or from Ken Bolze about their contacts with the Cumberland County Probation and Parole Office.

The school records of 59 out of 66 students were inspected. However, information on some of the student's records were incomplete. Nevertheless, the records generally reveal that the Alternative Learning Program is dealing with students who are having problems. For example, 49 of the student records were complete on the information of whether the students had either failed one or more grades or been passed to the next grade on the basis of age. Of these 40 students, 27 or 55% had either failed sometime or been passed to the next grade because of age. A number of these had failed two, three or four grades. Of some 49 students whose records were complete on the question of attendance at summer school, 47% had attended summer school at least once while 53% had not. Many of the students who went to summer school to deal with academic deficiencies had been there many times.

We also inspected the latest IQ scores of the students in the ALP. Of 55 records available 38 or 69% fell in the normal range of 90 to 110. Ten or 18% were below the 90 score while 7 or 13% were at 110 or above.

While living in a home without both natural parents is not necessarily a sign of home problems, often it is. Of 57 students whose parents marital status we could obtain, 27 or 47% lived with both parents. However, the other 30 students (53%) had parents who were divorced, separated or dead. Often they lived with one parent, some of whom were remarried, or with other relatives or foster parents in some instances. That many of the students have home related problems that may affect school attendance or academic performance is also indicated by scores on the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory administered to a control group (Home Room #2 of the 9th Grade in the Intermediate High School) and to Fall 1976 ALP students. At the beginning of the school year the control group had an average score of 11 on home-parent relations while the ALP had an average score of 7.7. (The higher the score the better the self-concept of the student with

regard to parental relations.) This statistically significant finding suggests more ALP students are having parental problems than typical students. This information was substantiated by ALP teachers. They report some of the students are neglected at home or have disagreements with their parents that have a greater intensity than may be true of many teenagers.

While most of the students in the ALP had fairly normal attendance records prior to coming into program, some had abysmal records. For example, in the 1975-76 school year and prior to the ALP program, one student had not been in school at all, one had missed 17 of 90 days, one 33 of 90 days and one 39 of 90 days. Of new entrants to the program in the fall of 1976, one student in the prior year had missed 85.5 out of 181 school days, one 18 out of 95 days, one 18.5 out of 181, and other students 20.5, 41 and 45.5 out of 181 days of school.

Most of the ALP students prior to coming into the program had low test scores in academic subjects and low grades. Most were borderline students who were averaging in the low C range. While many were having trouble with math, almost all were having trouble in reading. Twenty-six students took the Comprehensive Test in Basic Skills in Reading (Form Q2) in both September 1976 and January, 1977. For these 26 students, the average reading grade level in September was 6.6. Of the 26 students, most of them in the ninth or tenth grades, only 4 were reading at the ninth grade level or above. Twelve of them were reading at the sixth grade level or below. It is this fact which makes the teachers in the program feel that the most pressing academic problem with these students is to improve their vocabulary, reading and comprehension skills. The question remains whether students who enter the program and usually stay in it from anywhere from three months to two years can improve their reading skills sufficiently to return to the mainstream program and succeed in it.

Some other evidence exists that the ALP is serving students who are having behavior problems. Of some 66 students who have been involved in ALP from January of 1976 to December 3, 1976, 11 or 17% have had contact with the Juvenile Probation and Parole Office in Cumberland County. Of these eleven, 6 had committed (or been charged with an offense) both prior to and during their enrollment in ALP, 2 committed offenses during ALP enrollment and 2 committed offenses after their departure from the program. The range of charges and offenses included defiant trespass, theft, probation violation, assault, burglary, drug possession, perjury and property damage.

And of the 66 students in the program to December of 1976, 21% or 14 have either been referred to or had contact with the Office of Children's Services. Of these 14, 10 of them had contact with this office mainly prior to entry into ALP. Sometimes these children continued counseling with Children's Service for non-status offenses after entry into ALP. Three of them had contacts with that office after they exited from ALP in June of 1976. And one had contact with Children's Services only during the time he was in ALP. Most of these contacts involved school problems - usually truancy while several involved parent-child conflicts or other behavioral problems.

As can be seen by this evidence, the ALP is serving students who usually have academic problems often compounded with home problems and/or problems with peers and society at large. In summary then of somewhat incomplete records, 55% had experienced at least one grade failure in school, 47% had attended summer school at least once, 53% had experienced being separated from living with both parents, at least three-quarters of them are reading below grade level. Furthermore, 17% have had contact with the law because of illegal behavior while 21% have been referred to and/or received counseling from the Children's Service. Many of these students, then, have multiple problems. One cannot say whether the academic problems are a cause or a consequence of other problems. Rather the focus of the ALP should be to deal with the whole person - the intellectual and affective domains of the student - at the same time. Thus, some of the problems and divergences of viewpoints that have arisen in the ALP is whether more emphasis should be placed on the academic content of the ALP or its affective components. It is the evaluator's position that both need to be addressed simultaneously.

While a few more students may be served than the present estimate of 35-40, these students do need individual attention from people who care about them as persons. Unfortunately, many of these students have been lost in the back rows of classes for a number of years.

#### B. Academic Progress of the Students in ALP

While the social-emotional needs of students in the ALP are to receive special attention, academic progress was also a goal. The goal here is to give students individual attention and remedial work in order to give them a successful school experience for a change. However, some of the students come into the program with such low reading skills that it may be unrealistic



for them to gain the equivalent of four years of reading skills in one or two years or sometimes less.

In the staff report of 6-29-76, covering the four months of the 1975-76 ALP from late January to early June, 14 students were identified as needing remedial reading work. In January the average grade level equivalent for these fourteen students was 4.91 in vocabulary and comprehension scores. By June significant improvement had been made with twelve of these students. In that month the average grade level equivalent in reading was 6.21. Thus a gain of 1.3 grades was made on the average in the four month period.

In the 1976-77 school year, information is available on 26 ALP students who took reading and math tests in September and again in early January. In September the average reading grade level was 6.6, by January it had risen by .3 grade to 6.9<sup>1</sup>. Of the 26 students, 2 remained the same, 13 improved and 11 were lower. This rather small overall gain in nearly one-half the school year may suggest why the ALP staff believes a reading specialist is needed in the program. However, it should be pointed out that three students whose reading levels were high in September are not included in this report because they returned to the mainstream program on 12-3-76.

On the other hand, much more progress has been made in math. Based on a school wide test administered in September, the average correct score for ALP students was 38%. By January the average correct score was 60%, a gain of 22% in about four months. Of the 26 students all but one showed improved scores. Even the six ALP students who entered the program on 12-6-76 showed an average gain of 9.3% from 46% correct (originally tested on 11-23-76) to 55.3% correct on 1-9-77.

#### C. Results of the Affective Component of Education

In an attempt to get at whether students self-concepts changed or their relations with peers, parents, society or teachers changed, a number of methods were used. Information on this component was gathered from students by means of interviews and reinterviews, the pre-and post-administration and comparison of scores of the Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory, information from parents, information from teachers and others and information from the Office of Children's Services.

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1. The Q2 form of the Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills: Reading, was used.

The Coopersmith Self-Esteem Inventory (SEI) Form A contains 58 items, 8 of which form a "Lie Scale" and which are not included in the final score. The SEI contains four subscales with scoring as follows.

<u>Subscale</u>	<u>No. of Items</u>	<u>Scoring</u>	<u>Total Possible</u>
General self	26	x2	52
Social self-peers	8	x2	16
Homes - Parents	8	x2	16
School-academic	8	x2	<u>16</u>
Total			100

The national norms for this test are 71 for ages 9-15 and 76 for 16-23 with a standard deviation of about 11-13. However, there will be some variations in scores depending on the nature of the sample. Various tests of reliability have varied from .90 to .64 while validity as compared to similar measures have varied from .75 to .44. In interpreting scores, upper quartile scores generally indicate high self-esteem, bottom quartile scores low self-esteem while scores in the two middle quartiles would indicate medium self-esteem.

The Coopersmith SEI was administered to ALP students and a randomly chosen ninth grade homeroom in September, 1976 and again in early January, 1977. Several types of analysis was done with this data. In Table 1 we can first compare the mean pretest scores of the control group to the ALP group to see if they were different at the outset. In most ways they were. While attitudes of how they got along with or were viewed by peers were not significantly different, and general self views were statistically different only at the .10 level, other scores were significantly different. On the average, ALP students had significantly lower "home" scores. Practically this means that ALP students were less likely to report having fun with their parents or felt their parents considered their feelings or felt their parents gave them attention or understanding. Conversely, they were more likely to agree with statements that they felt pushed by their parents, got upset easily at home, that their parents expected too much of them or that there were many times when they'd like to leave home.

TABLE 1

Mean Pretest and Posttest Coopersmith Self-Esteem  
Inventory Scores of Control Group and ALP Students

	Control Group Mean	ALP Group Mean	df	Significance Level
Pretest Scores (10/76)				
General Self-Concept	37.3	33.1	54	.10
Social Self-Peers	11.3	11.4	54	Not sig.
Home-Parents	11.0	7.7	54	.001
School-Academic	<u>8.9</u>	<u>6.4</u>	<u>54</u>	<u>.01</u>
Total Scores	68.5	58.8	54	.01
(N)	(22)	(34)		
Posttest Scores (1/77)				
General Self-Concept	35.7	33.6	41	Not sig.
Social Self-Peers	11.6	10.4	41	Not sig.
Home-Parents	10.1	7.3	41	.02
School-Academic	<u>8.4</u>	<u>7.4</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>Not sig.</u>
Total Scores	65.9	59.4	41	.10
(N)	(19)	(24)		

And with regard to school academic matters ALP students were more likely to agree with statements they found it hard to talk in front of a class, weren't proud of their school work, often felt discouraged in school or that their teacher made them feel they were not good enough. On the other hand, they were more likely to disagree with statements that they were doing the best school work they could, liked to be called on in class, or were doing as well in school as they'd like to. Overall, the total pretest scores suggest that ALP students started with lower self-esteem than a sample of mainstream students.

Posttest scores suggest little change over time but do point out that the ALP and control group students remained somewhat different on the average, particularly as regards to school academic scores. However, total scores were significant only at the .10 level.

While Table 1 compared the control group to the ALP students, Table 2 presents data to see if either group changed over time. The sample is somewhat smaller here for to be included the same students had to take the test both at the beginning of the year and near the midyear point. Some of the ALP students had returned to the IHS, transferred out of the district or dropped out of school and thus were not tested at the end of the period.

The conclusion to be drawn from Table 2 is that neither the control group or ALP students showed a significant change over time. Thus, as measured by this inventory, ALP students did not show gains in self-esteem.

TABLE 2  
Mean Pretest and Posttest SEI Scores of Control  
Students and ALP Students

	Mean Pretest Scores	Mean Posttest Scores	df	Significance Level
Control Students (N=19)				
Total Scores	63.4	66.8	18	Not sig.
ALP Students (N=24)				
General Self-Concept	33.5	33.6	23	Not sign.
School-Academic	8.0	7.5	23	Not sign.
Home-Parent	8.5	7.5	23	Not sign.
Total Scores	60.0	59.4	23	Not sign.

On the other hand, the ALP teachers felt many of the students had gained in confidence about themselves and their ability to do passing quality of work. In the interviews and reinterviews of 12 students nearly all of them reported they hadn't liked school in the past but generally liked it better now. About the IHS, students said teachers gave them lots of hassle, didn't give help in reading, they expected too much of you, some classes were really boring, too many classes or classes were too hard. Students gave a number of reasons for liking ALP: it was easier, learning was fun, "classes were smaller and more interesting," "teachers weren't so specialized," "teachers explained things more if you had problems," less homework, fewer classes, "have more time to do homework," more freedom, "teachers don't bug you or yell at you," more career oriented, "broke things down so you could understand them," more attention from teachers, get better grades, more free time, interesting field trips instead of all classes, "getting better grades," and doing better in math or reading.

While the SEI scores of students may not show much change, many of them felt their attitudes and plans had changed as a result of being in ALP. For example, one boy said "I was ready to quit school last year. I had the papers signed. But now I want to complete school so I can go into the Air Force." A number of students reported understanding things better, of liking the teachers instead of fearing them, of not experiencing hassles. One student said his reading had improved even though he still didn't like it. Several students volunteered the information that they "work

harder here." Another student reported he "listens now, but didn't then" and that he got "help from teachers in and out of class." One student who reported in the fall he couldn't get along with his parents very well said he had a better attitude about a lot of things when I reinterviewed him in the winter. He now wants to go to school. "I can cope with teachers better; I don't stay mad as long. I learned to control my temper - don't get mad as much. I learned to get along well over here."

One girl reported she was careless with her schoolwork in the fall and couldn't get along with her parents or teachers. I asked her about these things when I reinterviewed her. "I skipped a lot at the beginning of the year. But now I like to come here better than to stay home - at the regular school you don't have time in class to get individual help, but here you have time to get help in class - not before or after school." When asked if she were getting along better with her teachers and parents or not, she said, "better, especially parents. I argue with them less."

At the beginning of the school year I asked students if "there was anything about yourself that you'd like to change while here?" About half the students answered yes and illustrated it upon prompting. For example, one girl said, "I'd like to change the way I act toward my parents. We're always fighting; I don't listen. I put things off until later. I want to change it." When I requested her on this on January 12, she said "things are better with my parents. We do more things as a family, we argue less."

One boy went so far as to say "I love it here." He cited progress in grades, "I even got a 5 in geography," that he was learning more and that it was fun. And "you can make up work if you miss it without a lot of hassle." He really looks forward to Thursdays when he and other students work at the Jr. High School with Mr. Kazel repairing electronic equipment such as tape recorders or projectors.

This illustrative material about the positive feelings students have about the ALP and the teachers in it could be multiplied many times over. Almost without exception students like it better than the regular school, feel they are learning more, believe the teachers care about them as persons as well as minds. And where students felt they needed to make some changes most reported they felt they made progress. While self reports such as



these may need to be discounted to a certain extent, I found them fairly convincing. And when I asked students who had been in the program both years if things were going better this year the unanimous answer was yes. They felt classes were better, there was more and fairer discipline, and that the whole school was running more smoothly.

Barbara Wishmeyer of the Cumberland County Children's Service reports that she has seen a real turnaround in some of the student once they began attending ALP. For example, one student was being (too?) severely punished by his parents for poor school performance before entrance into ALP. Now that he is doing better in school this problem has largely been resolved and minimal contact is being maintained by the agency. Another girl wanted to quit school, partly as a result of peer problems. But now that she is in ALP she is "doing fine" and the case has been closed. Several students who formerly hated school and/or were truancy problems have had their attitudes changed or truancy overcome with counseling and involvement in the ALP.

By telephone nine parents were interviewed. In response to the question "Have you noted any change in your child's attitude toward school?" All nine replied in the affirmative. Typical responses were "wants to go to school more," "he likes it better," "he's learning more and getting better grades," and "she likes her teachers." In response to the question if they had noted any changes in their child's behavior at home since being in ALP, five said "yes" and four "no." The yes statements indicated they thought the children were more mature or would do things without being told to do them or showed more respect. The no responses included that the kids were still irresponsible or moody but one parent said her child had always been good and didn't need to change. Six felt that the kids attitudes toward themselves had changed, such as being neater or showing initiative while three saw no change. And in response to the question if their children were thinking more realistically about future plans and goals six of nine parents said yes. One mother reported her child "doesn't talk about quitting anymore," while another said about her daughter, "she doesn't say what she wants to do but she does want more out of life than to be a maid like her sisters."

All nine parents responded positively to the question, "In general, would you say the ALP has been a positive or negative experience for your child?" Their response was followed by, "please explain." Explanations

included "he has no more headaches," "grades have improved," "hated the other school, he does better with individual attention," and "his study habits have improved."

When we asked for suggestions for the school, most parents offered none. But several seemed to be surprised by the lack of homework or the amount of free time students had or the need for closer supervision.

In response to questions whether they would like to become more involved in the program or meet with staff members sometime during the year, a majority responded "yes" to both questions. While a majority were happy to hear about the program or expressed a desire to talk about their children with a staff member, the ALP staff members felt some of this interest had to be discounted. In any case, a sizeable majority felt the program was positively benefiting their children academically, socially and attitudinally.

#### D. Was Absenteeism Reduced?

One of the goals of ALP was to reduce absenteeism by 25%. Overall this is a good goal for if students are not in school it is hard to make academic progress! On the other hand, if a student has a good attendance record before going into ALP, then it may be rather unrealistic to reduce it by 25%. Perhaps it might be a more realistic goal to reduce absenteeism by 25% for those students who formerly had high absenteeism records - say 10% or more of school days missed. We'll look at the evidence both ways.

As is shown in Table 3, in the 1975-76 school year, school absenteeism for ALP students prior to entering the ALP program was 14%. Based on 181 expected days of school a year, the average ALP student would have missed 25.3 days of school prior to being in ALP. But after entrance into the program the rate of absenteeism was reduced to 10.5% or based on 181 days of school a typical student would have missed 19 days. In the first year of operation then, overall absenteeism was reduced 25%.

As is shown in Table 4 the overall reduction in absenteeism was 12.5% so far in the 1976-77 school year. Absenteeism was reduced slightly more (14%) for students new to the program than to those in it the prior year as well (11%).

TABLE 3  
1975-76 Attendance Before and After Involvement in ALP

	Pre-Program Attendance Records	Program Attendance Records	% Reduction in Absenteeism
N	41*	43*	
Expected Days of School for all Students	3778	2461	
Days of Absence	529	259	
% Rate of Absenteeism	14.0	10.5	(25)
Average Number of Days Absent Per Student	12.9	6.0	

\* Of the 43 students involved in the program, one had not been in school prior to ALP and attendance records were not available for another. This explains the N of 41 for pre-program attendance.

TABLE 4  
Attendance Records of Students in ALP From  
9-7-76 to 1-12-77 Compared to Attendance Records Prior to ALP

	Attendance in 75-76 Prior to ALP Entry			Attendance in ALP from 9-7-76 to 1-12-77		
	Expected Days of School	Days of Absence	Average % of time Absent	Expected Days of School	Days of Absence	Average % of time Absent
Group I <sup>1</sup> (N=13)	1080	137	12.7	1020	115.5	11.3 <sup>a</sup>
Group II <sup>2</sup> (N=21)	2762	417	15.1	1496	202	13.0 <sup>b</sup>
Total I & II	3842	554	14.4	2516	317.5	12.6 <sup>c</sup>

1. Group I is composed of ALP students who were in the program both from 1-26-76 to 6-4-76 and from 9-7-76 to 1-12-77.
2. Group II is composed of students only in the ALP from 9-7-76 to 1-12-77.
- a. The % reduction in absenteeism for Group I = 11%
- b. The % reduction in absenteeism for Group II = 14%
- c. The % reduction in absenteeism for Groups I & II = 12.5%

However, the record of reducing absenteeism is better if we look at those students who missed 10% or more of all school days in the year (or partial year for Group I) prior to going into the ALP. This information is shown in Table 5.

TABLE 5

Reduction of Absenteeism Among ALP Students with a Record of Absenteeism of 10% or Higher Before Entering the AL Program

	Attendance in 75-76 Prior to ALP Entry			Attendance in ALP from 1-26-76 to 6-4-76 and from 9-7-76 to 1-12-77**		
	Expected Days of School	Days of Absence	Average % of time Absent	Expected Days of School	Days of Absence	Average % of time Absent
Group I* (N=5)	450	111	24.7	740	93	12.6 <sup>a</sup>
Group II*	1491	329.5	22.1	626	106	16.9 <sup>b</sup>
Total I & II	1941	440.5	22.7	1366	199	14.6 <sup>c</sup>

\*Groups I and II are defined in the footnotes to Table 4

\*\*This table differs from Table 4 in that for Group I we look at ALP Attendance for parts of two academic years while for Group II we look at ALP attendance for part of only one academic year.

<sup>a</sup> For these 5 students absenteeism was reduced an average of 49%.

<sup>b</sup> For these 10 students absenteeism was reduced an average of 28%.

<sup>c</sup> For these 15 students the overall reduction in absenteeism is 36%.

Thus, the bottom line in Table 5 is that among those 15 students who were missing 10% or more of all school days we find an absenteeism rate of 22.7% before entering ALP. But after entering ALP, their absentee record was reduced 36% to a 14.6% absentee rate. Translated into more understandable figures, before ALP these worst offenders were averaging missing 41 out of 181 school days, but after entry into ALP they were missing 26 out of 181 days. Since some students had good attendance records before going into ALP, it may be more realistic to ask if the ALP is especially helping those with poor attendance records. And the evidence says it is.

#### F. Have Drop-Out Rates Been Reduced?

Another goal of the program was to reduce drop-out rates by 25%. The goal is fine, the measurement of it is tricky and may require making more assumptions than is really legitimate. To know if we have reduced drop-out

rates we would have to compare drop-out rates year-by-year of both the control and ALP groups. But here several problems enter. (1) One assumption is that the groups are comparable. But here we face several barriers. For one thing, the ALP contains both males and females (about 3 or 4 males to every female) while the control group was made up of all males--and all of them enrolled in the vocational-technical course of study. Should we assume drop-out rates are the same for both sexes or different types of curriculums? Furthermore, the control group was selected ex-post facto by criteria that have never been explicitly stated. Does the control group provide a good comparison group? Our honest answer is that we don't know. (2) A second barrier is that we are dealing with two different time periods when social influences may differ. Should we assume these different time periods with different societal concerns are comparable? (3) A third barrier is that some of the students in the ALP to date have been in only two to four months while only 13 of 66 have been in it for nearly 1 academic year. What is a sufficient amount of time to determine if the program has had a real chance to alter student behavior or learning styles? (4) Furthermore, students have entered it in the 8th, 9th and 10th grades; again, this makes it less than comparable to the control group.

In spite of these significant limitations, we will make what comparisons we can at this time. But to make a full comparison would take four years and even then might rest on false assumptions about the comparability of the experimental treatment (ALP) group to the control group.

A new inspection of the 1974 control group shows it had a dropout rate of 42.2% (19 of 45 students) instead of 61% as originally stated. In the control group 20 or 44.5% graduated while five moved from the district (therefore data is incomplete on what happened to them) and one was killed before graduation. These six made up 13.3% of the total of 45.

Table 6 gives the relevant data on dropouts to date. So far seven students who have been enrolled in ALP have dropped out. This constitutes 10.6% of the 66 who have been enrolled in the program. But it is too early to draw sound conclusions on the basis of this incomplete data. However, we will analyze this data in more detail later when we analyze the costs and benefits of the ALP program.



TABLE 6

Drop-Out Rates by Grade for the 1974 Control Group  
and ALP Participants(to 12-3-1976)

	<u>1974 Control Group</u>		<u>ALP Participants**</u>
	N	%	N
Dropped Out in Grade 9	4		3
Dropped Out in Grade 10	7		4
Dropped Out in Grade 11	4		
Dropped Out in Grade 12	4		
TOTAL	19		7
Total Drop-Out %		42.2%*	10.6%
Total Graduations--% (20)		44.5	
Transferred from District--% (6)		13.3	(N=10)
Total (N)		100.0 (45)	(66)**

\*If we exclude five who transferred out of the district and for whom we don't have complete data, then the "certain drop-out rate" becomes 46.3%

\*\*This include all participants to date and not only the students in the program in 1975-76.

#### G. Have Institutional Contacts Been Reduced?

According to Kenneth W. Bolze, the Probation and Parole Officer Supervisor of the Cumberland County Probation Office, his office had contact with 7(16%) of the persons who were in the control group of 1974. Of these seven, one had been in a juvenile institution, two had been put on probation as juveniles(ages 13-17), and the remaining four had no juvenile records but did have records as adults. Of these seven, as adults, three are now in a state prison, three were or are on probation while one has had his theft charge dismissed.

While only three students of the class of 1974 had Probation Office contacts as juveniles, eleven of the students sometime involved in ALP had such contacts. However, here we face a problem of how to count. As is shown in Table 7, 6 of 11 of these students had Probation Office contacts prior to ALP enrollment. Five students have had contact prior to and during enrollment, or only during enrollment or after exiting from the ALP.

One conclusion that can be drawn from this data is that the ALP is in contact with many of the students in trouble with the law. Whether it is

TABLE 7

## ALP Students With Probation Office Contacts

Time Of Offense or Charged Offense*	N	Disposition for Offenses (N=13)		
		Probation	Facility**	Disposition Pending
Prior to ALP Entry	6	4	1	1
Prior to & During ALP Placement	1 <sup>a</sup>	1		1
Only During ALP Placement	2	2 <sup>b</sup>		1 <sup>b</sup>
Only After ALP Placement	2	1		1
TOTALS	11	8	1	4

\*From the information provided we have tried to determine when the offense occurred. Often the probation office has contact with such persons for more than a year after the offense occurred.

\*\*A facility for deprived children.

<sup>a</sup>Two offenses at different times, the second one is pending disposition.

<sup>b</sup>One person has a disposition pending for a second offense.

doing things that reduce institutionalization is an open question. We suspect it is in many instances, but if we want hard data to answer the question it may be difficult to calculate. What we can say is that 5 or 7.5% out of a total of 66 ALP enrollees in comparison to 3 or 6.7% of the control group had contact with the Probation Office as juveniles. This appears as no reduction, but fails to include contacts with the children's service, climbing rates of juvenile delinquency and perhaps better police detection than formerly. It also fails to answer the many problems we raised earlier about the comparability of the control and ALP groups.

## V. COST-BENEFIT ANALYSIS

The cost-benefit analysis portion of this study has presented many headaches for the evaluator. Accurate and complete student academic records and social agency contacts are hard to secure, analyze and properly organize for clear presentation. Furthermore, whole year academic records are needed; in fact, four years of academic records for ALP students are needed, before

I can draw very sound conclusions. Even then, I have to make strong assumptions about the comparability of the 1974 control group and ALP students. So far, I have data only for the 1975-76 year, when the program was in operation for only 90 days (one half of an academic year), and for 60 days in 1976-77.

In spite of these limitations, I will show the methodology used in the cost-benefit study. I will also show the highly tentative conclusions that can be drawn now, but which must await further data before much weight can be put in them.

#### A. Methodology of Dollar Cost-Benefit Analysis

The costs for the program are simple to calculate; however, alternate ways are available. Of the three ways to calculate per-pupil costs, I think the second one described below is the fairest in assessing costs. On the other hand, it does not include many of the administrative costs as does the third method. The third per-pupil cost figure assumes that no other instructional costs are lowered for the school system by the presence of the ALP. If we accept this assumption however, the per-pupil cost is nearly twice that of the #II per-pupil cost.

#### Three Ways of Calculating ALP Per-Pupil Annual Costs

I. Annual Per-Pupil Cost for all students involved in the ALP to date.	$\frac{\$58,500}{73}$	=	\$801
II. Annual Per-Pupil Cost for an average of 40 students in the program full-time.	$\frac{\$58,500}{40}$	=	\$1,463
III. Annual Per-Pupil Cost for an average of 40 students in the program full-time plus the per-pupil cost of the regular school.	$\$1,463 + \$1,380$	=	\$2,843

The dollar benefits from the program are more complex to calculate. I will look at dollar benefits to individuals. This will be done in terms of increased lifetime earnings if students can be maintained in school rather than dropping out. Secondly, I will examine benefits in terms of taxes generated from higher lifetime earnings if students are graduated, rather than dropping out. Third, I will look at benefits--either savings or higher costs--to government in terms of court costs or juvenile service agency costs.

Before I can calculate benefits, we must determine how to calculate changes in drop-out rates, and also look at data on lifetime earnings and tax revenues as influenced by years of education.

Table 8 shows how drop-out rates were calculated for the control group for each year. We would not need to worry about annual drop-out rates if we were comparing two classes over four years. But now there is, at best, partial data for a year, and it is noted that a few eighth grade and tenth grade students (more of the latter) have come into the program.

TABLE 8

Calculations for the Yearly Drop-Out Rate by Class for the 1974 Control Group

Class	Fr.	So.	Jr.	Sr.
Year	70-71	71-72	72-73	73-74
N at beginning of year (after prior year drop-outs)	45	40	31	25
Transfers during the year	<u>-1</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>-2</u>	<u>-1</u>
Base N for calculating drop-out rate	44	38	29	24
Drop-out during yr ÷ base N	$\frac{4}{44}$	$\frac{7}{38}$	$\frac{4}{29}$	$\frac{4}{24}$
Drop-Out Rate (%)	9.1	18.4	13.8	16.6

A similar analysis was done on ALP students for each of three classes; that is, the classes of 77-78, 78-79, and 79-80, and for each of the two ALP program years--75-76 and 76-77 to date. Since that analysis is too long to present here, I will simply summarize the data to date and then indicate how it will be used in cost benefit analysis.

ALP drop-out rates to date are 8.3% for Freshman (three dropouts of 36 in 75-76), and 12% for Sophomores (four out of 33 for 75-76 and 76-77 to date). However, these rates will certainly change as new students, Freshmen or Sophomores, continue to enter the program each 60 day cycle. Each group of students will have to be followed for either three (Sophomores) or four (Freshmen) years to determine dropout rates for each class. This will become an increasingly larger bookkeeping chore for the evaluator as he traces out the academic career of each student in the program.

To determine the impact of the ALP program on drop-out rates compared to those of the control group, I compared the expected drop-out rate to the actual

drop-out rate. This comparison is shown in Table 9.

TABLE 9

Expected and Observed Drop-Out Rates And  
Number of Drop-Outs in the ALP Program to Date\*

	Expected Drop-Out Rate and N Based on Control Group of 1974			ALP Observed Drop-Out Rate and Drop-Out N		
	Expected Drop-Out Rate	ALP N Base Used	N Drop-Outs Expected	Observed Rate	N Observed	N Difference
Fr.	9.1%	36	3.3	8.3%	3	+ .3
So.	18.4%	36	6.5	12.0%	4	+2.5
		TOTALS	9.8		7	+2.8

\*Note: Any eighth graders in the program were grouped with ninth graders and juniors grouped with sophomores to ease computation.

The tentative conclusion is that, so far, the drop-out number is 28.6% lower than might be expected if the 1974 rates prevailed. If we make the assumption that this trend will continue, what would be the dollar benefit of graduating 28% more of the students who might have dropped out of school had the 1974 rate prevailed?<sup>1</sup> Before that analysis can be made, we must first look at lifetime earnings and tax income by years of education.

TABLE 10

Lifetime Earnings, Estimated Tax Rates and Revenues  
by Years of Schooling Completed

Years of Education Completed	Lifetime Earnings	Percent Tax Rates Assum- ing Standard Deductions			Combined Tax Revenue
		Fed.	State	Local	
8 grades or less	\$344,000	9%	2.5%	6%	\$60,200
9-11 grades	\$389,000	10%	2.5%	6%	\$69,965
12 grades	\$479,000	11%	2.5%	6%	\$93,405

1. Information from the first two columns is for 1972 and will be updated when available. It is from "Income of Men by Years of School Completed," American Education, Mr. 1974, Vol. 10, No. 3, Back Cover.

Tax rates were estimated for the evaluator by a CPA.

1. The evaluator suspects this 28% figure may decline as full year data becomes available.



The overall drop-out rate for the class of 1974 over a four-year period was 49% (see Table 8: 19 drop-outs  $\div$  45-6 transfers). Assume that that rate is applied to a class of 40 students in ALP. The expected drop-out number would be 19. If that drop-out rate could be reduced by 28%, five (5) additional students would graduate each year.

B. Results of Cost-Benefit Analysis

1. Benefits to individuals. If five additional students were maintained in school through graduation as opposed to dropping out between grades 9 and 11, each would have benefited \$90,000 in lifetime pre-tax earnings. The total pre-tax gain for the five students would have been \$450,000 or \$117,200 for after-tax earnings. If we divide each of these figures by the number of pupils (40), we get an average per pupil benefit of \$11,250 and \$2,925 respectively. If these figures are divided by the per-pupil cost of the ALP program, we get a cost-benefit ratio per pupil as follows.

$$\frac{\text{Average Pre-Tax Dollar Benefit Per Individual}}{\text{Program Cost Per Individual}} = \frac{\$11,250}{\$1,463} = 7.90$$

This means for each dollar spent there is an average return of \$7.90 for each individual.

However, if we use the less conservative per-pupil ALP expenditure of \$2,843 as the denominator and the average post-tax dollar benefit per individual (\$2,925) as the numerator, the benefit is \$1.03 for each dollar spent.

2. Benefits to taxing bodies. If we assume we kept five students in school who otherwise would have dropped out between grades 9 and 12, their combined tax revenues would have been \$117,200 (\$93,405 - \$69,965 x 5). If we divide the assumed program tax benefits by the cost of the program, \$58,500, the resulting benefit-to-cost ratio is two.

If we include the court-related costs, the benefits would be lower. To date, the ALP program has had one student incarcerated, while the control group also had one, but that was in four years. The ALP has had six students on probation, or in contact with that office, in one year, while the control only had three in four years. At an estimated annual cost of \$200 per year for each student on probation, this figure is already higher for the ALP (\$1200 in one year) than for the control group (\$600 in four years).

3. Limitations of Cost Benefit Analysis. The evaluator wants to make clear that the above figures are highly preliminary. Furthermore, there are, or may be, many benefits from the program that cannot be subjected to dollar measurement. These short and long-term non-dollar benefits include improved self concepts of ALP students, better peer relations, better home-parent relations, perhaps reduced costs for adult incarceration, better lifetime earnings that may result from staying in school even one year longer, and the greater daily enjoyment that ALP students express about school.

#### VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The interim report on the Carlisle ALP, dated 11-30-76, contained a long list of recommendations. There were nine recommendations made about the administration of the program, three about its faculty, and one each about the students, curriculum and facility. A rationale was given for each of the recommendations. In this section of the report, I will first summarize these recommendations and the responses being made to them. Most of the reports on the responses to them are based on a conversation with Mr. Dave Edgren on January 12, 1977. Several additional recommendations will be made.

##### A. Summary of Interim Recommendations and Responses to Them.

1. The relevant people involved in the ALP should develop a written statement about the educational goals and philosophy of the program. This statement should include such things as overall goals, student selection and expulsion criteria and procedures, the nature of the "alternative" program open to students, and numbers to be served.  
Response: discussions are being held to alleviate program ambiguities and to develop a clearly stated educational philosophy for the program.
2. Restrict the program to ninth and tenth graders with only occasional exceptions.  
Response: this will be done.
3. Separate the curricular aspects from the fiscal aspects of administration and develop clear lines of communication for both.  
Response: discussions are being held on this, mainly to improve channels of communication. But to a large extent the control of the program will remain administratively centralized.
4. Provide for more visitations to the ALP center by area school teachers at all levels.

Response: this will be done.

5. Seek one-half year or one and one-half year funding to align program funding with the school year.

Response: this will not be done; but should the program be defunded the Carlisle school district will complete the program for that academic year.

6. Review the role and heavy administrative composition of the ALP Advisory Committee.

Response: This recommendation is being discussed with the role of the Advisory committee being defined as identifying ALP problem areas and suggesting solutions.

7. Publish a regular in-house newsletter for the school district to enhance the image of the ALP.

Response: this will be done.

8. Improve curricular planning and coordination by including Junior High, Intermediate High School, and High School guidance counselors and teachers on the advisory committee.

Response: no action taken yet, but consideration is being given to the recommendation.

9. The ALP faculty should be more aggressive in their defense and promotion of the program.

Response: no information available on this.

10. Provide for greater staff input in developing the program budget and getting feedback on budget expenditures.

Response: this has been done although the staff sometimes feels, perhaps unjustifiably, that they are not adequately consulted.

11. Review the strengths and limitations of the present facility and alternative facilities to determine if a better one can be found at a reasonable cost.

Response: no action taken to date on this.

12. The ALP curriculum needs to be stated in written form including cognitive and affective behavioral goals, the educational means of achieving these goals, and how the degree of achievement of these objectives will be evaluated.

Response: the need for this is recognized, but it will take time to achieve it.

13. Written syllabi are needed for all ALP courses including the statement of objectives in behavioral terms for each course.

Response: while some reluctance has been expressed in doing this, it will be done over a period of time.

14. Make appropriate changes in teaching assignments in order to take advantage of the expertise available.

Response: this has been done by Bob Herncane and Mike Rothschild exchanging reading and math teaching assignments.

15. Encourage input from other relevant individuals in recommending potential students for the ALP.

Response: this will be done as the program becomes better known, especially by teachers.

16. Change ALP course titles to reflect the "alternative" nature of the courses.

Response: this will be done.

#### B. New Recommendations

Since the interim recommendations were made, conversations with the ALP faculty and some administrators have been held. In addition, all the data on student performance has been analyzed and interpreted. Thus, the following recommendations reflect this new information.

Two problems stand out in my mind and are articulated well by the ALP faculty. These are the problems of (1) counseling for students, since a sizeable majority of them have social-emotional problems, and (2) the poor reading performance by nearly all of the students in the ALP. This poor reading performance is usually compounded by home, legal and/or emotional problems. Ideally, the staff would like a full time reading specialist and a full-time counselor, or at least one additional staff person combining these talents. On the other hand, the administration says it does not have the money for such a person or persons and does not know if the Governor's Justice Commission would fund additional staffing. Both may be right. The following recommendations address these problems.

1. I recommend that the administration and faculty together review the options available for additional help in the area of counseling and in the area of reading and choose that combination of alternatives which is most desirable within existing fiscal constraints.

Since most of the students are having reading problems they need special help here if they are to have a successful educational experience,

return to and stay in the mainstream program, and deal with the world upon graduation. A number of options are available here between the extremes of doing nothing differently and hiring a full time reading specialist or coordinator. And these options are not mutually exclusive. (1) Free consultation is available from the State Department of Education on reading. (2) Most Intermediate Units provide free consultation on reading and/or in-service units on reading. (3) ALP instructors might get released time to take I.U. in-service courses or college level courses on diagnosing reading problem and corrective reading. (4) Good books are available in this area to increase the expertise of teachers in reading such as Harry Forgan and Charles Mangram's, Teaching Content Area Reading Skills: A Modular Preservice and Inservice Program (Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., Columbus, Ohio 43216, 1976). (5) Greater use of the Carlisle School District's own reading coordinator might be made by the staff on how to diagnose reading problems and individualize reading programs for their students. (6) A reading consultant could be hired for a few days for instructing the staff and volunteers (such as Dickinson College education students) in diagnosing problems and devising reading plans and giving individual help to students.

While a full-time counselor might be desirable, other options, much like the above, need to be considered. These include greater use of school psychologists and guidance counselors. Perhaps a greater number of referrals can be made to the Cumberland County Office of Children's Services or to the Carlisle Counseling Center next door if feasible financial arrangements can be worked out. And the ALP's limited staff expertise may be increased here by special training in psychology and counseling. This brings us to our second recommendation.

2. I recommend that the administration give special consideration to the continuing education needs of the ALP staff. My rationale for this is that the ALP teachers not only have to be specialists in the sense of commitment to the program, but must deal with a range of problems that most teachers do not have to deal with. ALP students need more than remedial math and English, although these are critically needed too. They need teachers who can counsel about drugs, jobs, home problems, sexual questions and personal dilemmas. To this end they need to visit other alternative learning programs and take course work in counseling

and remedial work and in teaching in the affective domain.

3. I recommend that the staff and administration review the time commitment required of ALP students to academic matters. I want to read lightly here. It is generally assumed in most alternative learning programs geared to underachievers that a different kind of learning experience is needed. This the Carlisle ALP gives, especially on Project Days when most students work or explore the world at large. At the same time, especially in the eyes of program critics, the academic underachievers are spending even less time on academic matters and on homework than mainstream students apparently are. In light of the limited amount of time spent on reading and the desperate need for it, consideration needs to be given to the idea of requiring more of these students. But if this is done, the qualitative difference with the mainstream program should not be lost. Perhaps more in-class and homework time needs to be spent on reading and writing while simultaneously trying to maintain that atmosphere of individualized attention and approaches that make learning fun and challenging.
4. I would like to see the staff try to develop measures of whether they are effective in changing students' affective attitudes and behavior. Since they are much closer to the students than an outside evaluator is, they may have ideas of how to do this. I recognize this is a difficult and challenging request. Furthermore, I question whether I have done a really satisfactory job of measuring student conceptions of themselves or their sense of personal responsibility. It is a task not easily accomplished. While I know the staff is concerned with this question, I would like them to develop ideas on how to test their effectiveness in this area.
5. My overall recommendation is that the Carlisle Alternative Learning Program be refunded. While some of the evidence is mixed about whether the program is reaching its goals, it is certainly sufficient in my mind to continue the program. Academic progress is being made, absenteeism is reduced, especially among the most truant, drop-outs appear to be reduced by the preliminary data, most students report greater satisfaction with school and their academic performance, and the program is operating better in its second academic year in the opinion of teachers, students, administrators and parents. This evidence supports the continuation of the program.



**END**