A Report of an Internship in Central Office Administration in the Forest Hills Public Schools

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A REPORT OF AN INTERNSHIP IN CENTRAL OFFICE ADMINISTRATION IN THE FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

by

Joyce M. Newhouse

A Project Report
Submitted to the
Faculty of the Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Specialist in Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
December, 1981
This is a report of an internship experience in central office administration. It is a study of the Forest Hills School District, Grand Rapids, Michigan, following a millage defeat, and depicts the central office administrators as they accept the challenges thrust upon them. It is an analysis of the roles and responsibilities inherent in the positions of the superintendency and assistant superintendencies of business, instruction and personnel as they emerged during a crisis period. The information is presented from the vantage point of the administrative intern who functioned as an additional staff member.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to express my gratitude to the faculty of the Department of Educational Leadership, particularly Dr. Carol Sheffer for her assistance in the selection of the Forest Hills School District as the setting for my internship experience, and for her encouragement and support when needed. I also acknowledge the excellent instruction and professional counsel of Dr. Richard Munsterman, my adviser, and Dr. Harold Boles.

I am especially thankful to the Forest Hills Public Schools during the administration of Superintendent Dr. Philip Schoo, for the opportunity to work as a member of their central office staff during my tenure as an administrative intern. Everyone was willing to contribute their time and expertise in assisting me toward achieving my professional objectives. I cannot thank them enough.

Joyce M. Newhouse
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Understanding the operation of an educational organization, such as a local school district, and gaining insight regarding the intricacies of it, cannot be derived solely from university instruction or textbooks. Those with expertise in the area of school administration and/or leadership can provide potential leaders with informational resources based on research findings, but the application of theories and skill development thrive in the actual environment. An internship experience can be an ideal setting for the above to take place.

The Forest Hills Public School District was selected as the environment for this internship for the following reasons: 1) the system provides a K-12 education for approximately 5,000 students, 2) it has a community education program which operates year around to serve the needs of adults living in the school district, 3) the district has an annual budget of about $10 million, and 4) it is a leader in the Kent Intermediate School District. Because of its size, the central office administration is specialized, and there is a key administrator in the areas of business, instruction, personnel, and the superintendency. This is an advantage for the intern as the role and responsibilities for each position are clearly
defind. If one has any feelings of apprehension regarding his/her own aspirations as an educational leader in a particular role, it can be reduced through close alignment with a person employed in that position.

In addition to the fact that the Forest Hills School District met criteria for a quality internship experience, its superintendent and other central office personnel were interested in accepting as intern for the summer months. Arrangements were made cooperatively with the intern and university personnel in a spirit of excitement and anticipation. Goals were set on a tentative basis since the school district did not want to be locked into a set of goals and objectives that would be less productive than those that might emerge from the natural circumstances.

It was agreed that the internship would begin on the day of the first Board of Education meeting following the millage election. That date was June 17, 1980. The formal experience would conclude on August 1, 1980 with exit interviews scheduled for later in the school year. The general purpose of the internship was that the intern should become knowledgeable regarding the role and responsibilities of each type of central office position, and how each position impacts others during information gathering, decision making, and communication activities. During the allotted time spent with each administrator, expanded information about that administrator's areas of
responsibility would be attained by the intern to the
greatest extent possible. Examples of topics to be stud-
ied would be as follows: running a millage campaign,
staffing, evaluation of personnel, budget development,
staff reduction plan, record keeping, interpersonal re-
lationships and communication, transportation, instruc-
tional program development, curriculum change, and main-
tainance of the physical plant.

Actually, the general purpose was broadened without
intent to include a study of influences outside the educa-
tional institution itself and the personnel employed. The
public pressure upon the Board of Education was highly
visible, and resulted in several non-supportive articles in
the daily newspaper. These developments resulted in over-
night shifting of priorities and changes in daily and
weekly scheduling of administrative time. The anxiety
level for those making critical decisions was kept at a
continuous high. Thus the benefits received from obser-
ving highly competent educational leaders tackling issues
and situations as they arose were multiplied.

It must be noted that situations observed were re-
acted to occurred in rapid succession beginning at the
time it was known that the millage proposals were defeated.
The fact that the intern was welcomed graciously and immedi-
ately included in the day's scheduled activities on June
17, 1980, is an indication of the professionalism of the
administrative team.

The team consisted of the Superintendent, the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, the Assistant Superintendent for Business. These people worked long hours, held numerous meetings and conferences on a daily basis, and continued to perform their usual tasks of the summer months. The pressure of opening school on time, in spite of the fact that drastic budget cuts were being made affecting all phases of the educational program, was ever present.

The intern was expected to function as a competent professional throughout the experience, and contributions made were received as part of the output of the central office administration. Knowledge gained, and skills acquired and developed during this internship, were innumerable.
CHAPTER II

THE ROLE OF THE PROSPECTUS

The prospectus, a university requirement for persons planning an internship experience, was based upon the intern gaining knowledge regarding the role and responsibilities of each central office position. The following goals and objectives were established:

I GOAL: To gain knowledge regarding the role and responsibilities of the Superintendent.

OBJECTIVES: A. To understand the philosophical framework within which a superintendent must operate, that is, the educational philosophy of the school district.

B. To understand the conceptual framework within which the superintendent must operate, including the district goals and objectives, the organizational hierarchy, and community expectations.

C. To become knowledgeable regarding the areas of accountability and responsibility which the superintendent must assume, such as:

- Board of Education
- Administration

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- Staff
- Students
- Taxpayers
- Parents
- Special Interest Groups
- Media

D. To acquire and/or develop skills necessary to the function of the superintendency, for example:
- Problem solving
- Decision making
- Communication
- Gathering data
- Delegation

II GOAL: To gain knowledge regarding the role and responsibilities of the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel.

OBJECTIVIES: A. To gain information regarding the staffing needs of the district.

B. To become knowledgeable regarding the philosophical framework within which the administrator for personnel must operate.

C. To become knowledgeable regarding board policies and district goals and objectives as they relate to personnel administration.
D. To understand the interpersonal relationship necessary for a productive working environment.

E. To become knowledgeable regarding the development and implementation of the staff reduction procedure.

F. To become knowledgeable regarding the process for evaluation of staff.

G. To acquire and/or develop skills essential to the function of the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel, including:
   - interviewing
   - listening
   - gathering data
   - communication
   - writing job descriptions

III GOAL: To gain knowledge regarding the role and responsibilities of the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction.

OBJECTIVES: A. To understand the philosophical framework within which the administrator for instruction must operate.

B. To become knowledgeable regarding the development and implementation of the instructional program.
C. To become knowledgeable regarding the process for curriculum change.
D. To understand the process for creating a position climate for curriculum change.
E. To develop skills essential to this position, such as:
   - listening
   - communication (written and oral)
   - gathering data
   - using group process

IV GOAL: To gain knowledge regarding the role and responsibilities of the Assistant Superintendent for Business.

OBJECTIVES: A. To become knowledgeable regarding the philosophical framework within which the key administrator for business must operate.
B. To become knowledgeable regarding the practical framework within which this administrator must operate, specifically that of budget revenues and expenditures.
C. To gather data regarding the area of transportation.
D. To gain practical experience in the area of budget development.
E. To become knowledgeable regarding a sound
maintenance program.

To acquire and/or develop skills essential to this position, particularly
- interpretation of educational program in financial terms
- evaluation of financial data
- gathering data regarding district needs.

This prospectus served to be useful only in that it provided a basic procedural plan or outline for the intern. As was mentioned previously, circumstances developed within the school district that changed the character of the internship.

Understanding the philosophical and conceptual framework for each central office administrator became vital to functioning meaningfully within the setting. Any study was that of individuals performing within those frameworks.

Conceptual development needed to occur rapidly. As soon as philosophical and intellectual data was acquired, it needed to be applied, if the intern was to contribute as a team member and serve as a resource to the central office staff. The emphasis was upon skill application, not reading and studying, though the information was essential to appropriate problem solving.

The value of the prospectus was diminished by virtue
of the dynamic situation within the school district. Though the majority of the objectives stated were indeed accomplished during the internship experience, and data gathered was pertinent to the effective solution of key issues, the purpose for attainment was of a practical nature and not ends in themselves.

Chapter two will provide the reader with a picture of the role of the intern functioning during a dynamic period of "crisis management".
CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

The greatest single event which determined this course of the internship was the millage election held in the Forest Hills School District the week prior to the arrival of the intern. The following millage proposals were placed before the voting public:

Proposal A - request for renewal of 23 mills for one year for general operating funds
Proposal B - request for additional 2 mills for one year for general operating funds
Proposal C - request for additional \( \frac{1}{2} \) mill for one year for new and replacement equipment in specific areas of the school program
Proposal D - request for additional \( \frac{1}{2} \) mill for one year for maintenance and improvement of facilities.

The Board of Education warned that $600,000 worth of budget cuts, including eliminating extracurricular activities and sports, would have to be made if Proposal B was defeated.

On the same ballot, the voters were given the opportunity to elect two candidates to the Board of Education. One candidate was running to represent "the rights of the forgotten taxpayer," and his platform was based upon the position that there was no need for additional millage.
CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

The greatest single event which determined this course of the internship was the millage election held in the Forest Hills School District the week prior to the arrival of the intern. The following millage proposals were placed before the voting public:

Proposal A - request for renewal of 23 mills for one year for general operating funds
Proposal B - request for additional 2 mills for one year for general operating funds
Proposal C - request for additional $\frac{1}{2}$ mill for one year for new and replacement equipment in specific areas of the school program
Proposal D - request for additional $\frac{1}{4}$ mill for one year for maintenance and improvement of facilities.

The Board of Education warned that $600,000 worth of budget cuts, including eliminating extracurricular activities and sports, would have to be made if Proposal B was defeated.

On the same ballot, the voters were given the opportunity to elect two candidates to the Board of Education. One candidate was running to represent "the rights of the forgotten taxpayer," and his platform was based upon the position that there was no need for additional millage.
and that more responsible allocation and use of the 23 mills renewal would solve the district's financial problems. The other two candidates on the ballot were incumbents who supported the millage proposals as presented.

All of the proposals for additional millage were defeated. Proposal A was successful. One incumbent and the candidate who appointed himself as the people's advocate were elected to the Board of Education.

The election results caused several issues to surface and become priority items for the school administration during the next several months. These issues were: 1) would the Board of Education hold fast to its pre-election stand on cutting extracurricular activities, 2) what program cuts should be made and would they be based on the actual needs of the student population, 3) what reductions in staff were necessary to reduce expenditures in the personnel area, 4) maintenance priorities, and 5) whether there should be another millage election.

Central office administrators continued to assume responsibility for their regularly assigned duties and tasks, but chiefly as they were necessary to accomplish long term goals or satisfy the needs dictated by the current situation. Routine items became incidentals and were handled with dispatch. Demands upon central office personnel were optimum in terms of time, expertise, effort, and energy. The intern was included as a member of the administrative
team and functioned in that manner throughout the internship experience.

The intern had planned to gain knowledge regarding the role and responsibilities of each central office administrator by observation, analysis, and participation, during a scheduled time period spent in each office. The dynamics of the crisis situation in the school district necessitated a more realistic approach. In addition to the fact that continuous interaction was required between two, three or four of the administrators for efficient and effective problem solving, there were also the necessary vacation periods enjoyed by each, which reduced the opportunities for working with each person as a separate entity. In spite of these circumstances, the intern was able to accomplish the desired objectives through involvement with the superintendent and assistant superintendents as issues were confronted and dealt with.

KEY ISSUES

1. Would the Forest Hills Board of Education hold fast to its pre-election stand on cutting extracurricular activities?

The defeat of Proposal B, or 2 mills needed for general operation necessitated cuts amounting to $600,000. It was determined that the 1979-80 extracurricular budget costs were $150,000. Twenty-five thousand was spent
for uniforms and eight thousand for ticket takers at the gate. At the June board meeting, four work sessions were set by the board and the administration to discuss the problem, and to listen to the comments and concerns of the community, the staff and the students.

Following these sessions several conversations took place on a daily basis between the superintendent and the board president, individual board members, building principals, program directors, central office staff members, and citizens. If not present, the intern was appraised of the information that was being exchanged to make certain that an awareness of the total picture existed at all times.

The issue was not just that of financially supporting extracurriculars, but also that of the board's credibility versus their obligation to respond to the voice of the community.

As many as 350 people attended the work sessions which were held once or twice a week. School officials, including the intern, worked sixty hour weeks during this time period.

Finally, the board left it up to the administrators to come up with a budget that included a "bare bones" extracurricular program and the cuts needed to balance the budget. It was suggested by the assistant superintendent for business that perhaps some duties that the district was paying for could be assumed by volunteers.
Very evident was the emergence of resultant responsibilities for the superintendent in the areas of coordination of money-raising projects by various groups, the establishment of functional productive communication lines with the leaders of these groups, and the clarification of legalities regarding their activities. His response and attitude determined the idea's potential for success.

Meetings were held with Music Boosters, Band Boosters, Athletic Boosters, and Parent Teacher Organizations. An ad hoc committee to the superintendent was organized to keep the lines of communication open between the Board of Education, administration and the community. The initial task was to focus on current budget issues. The long-range goal would be to improve the image of the school district and to help the citizens become more knowledgeable about the total operation of the school district.

The intern was involved in planning for the committee, but did not attend the initial meeting scheduled for August 11.

2. What program cuts should be made and would they be based on the actual needs of the student population?

The newest board member suggested the following reductions: reduction of counselling positions by 50% for at least one year, elimination of seventh hour in the middle school, and elimination of the position of Assistant Superintendent for Instruction. Another board member
proposed increasing class size, cutting transportation, combining small classes at both high schools and offering the course at just one, and eliminating or postponing goals for improvement of the instructional program. A third board member suggested cuts in the athletic program using fewer coaches, cutting equipment purchases, and seeking volunteers, for example. In the area of curriculum he proposed that no new programs or texts be implemented except science, and the elimination of "fringe programs" such as photography. It was evident that very few reductions can be implemented without effecting students.

The North Central Report indicated that more programs were needed for the non-college bound. In spite of various meetings with the high school principals, the Vocational-Education Director, the Assistant Superintendent for Business, the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, the Superintendent, and the intern, the vocational education program was seriously curtailed. The program was eliminated from one high school, forcing students from the second high school to commute if they wished to participate. Upon further study of the interest in the high school involved and the projected staff, it was decided that there would not be any vacancies for students from the other building.

The intern and the Assistant Superintendent for Business reviewed the current transportation routes with the
Director of Transportation. It was decided that a change in the policy of picking up kindergarteners at the door was necessary. The intern and the superintendent traveled various routes to determine where stops could be eliminated or where routes could be shortened.

The calendar which was developed by the intern and approved by the Board of Education for the 1980-81 school year, reflected reduced transportation costs. As many days were eliminated as possible, and an effort was made to reduce instances where students at various educational levels had different schedules, e.g. exam time, requiring double transporting on certain days. At the same time the total clock hours of instruction were increased for elementary, middle school, and high school students.

Work sessions to review possible budget cuts were held for the purpose of reporting to the Board of Education and to the public regarding the impact of decisions if implemented. All Central Office administrators attended these sessions as well as many other school personnel and the voters. The Forest Hills budget is included in the Appendix.

3. What reductions in staff were necessary to reduce expenditures in the personnel area?

Since personnel tends to be a costly item in all districts, reducing staff is often a quick way to cut large sums of money from a budget. Here, as in many other school
districts, the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel was directed to cut back as far as possible, increasing class size, consolidating teaching positions, etc. Eighteen newly tenured and probationary teachers had been terminated in March, 1980 in anticipation of this directive.

All personnel cuts did not involve teachers. The position of Director of Publications was eliminated resulting in a serious reduction of services in that area, some of which would be assumed by the secretary. The Director of Media Services was given the option of returning to a teaching position or to that of middle school librarian. Various proposals were submitted by these people to the central office administrators, but they could not be accepted.

At the same time the teaching staff had received a 9% raise. The administrators' salary increase was debated strongly by the Board of Education before they were granted several weeks later. Again the support for the administrative team, exhibited by the superintendent, was a key factor in gaining enough votes to pass the increase.

The intern was keenly aware that the responsibilities of the Assistant Superintendent for Personnel were many and varied. Frequent board presentations required hours of data gathering regarding staffing needs, reassignment possibilities, vacancies occurring where staff could not be reassigned, clarification of job descriptions, financial
data based on persons already in positions, etc. At the same time viable lines of communication needed to be maintained with all persons effected.

Responsibilities assigned the intern were varied. The intern assisted in the area of recruiting candidates for available positions, by contacting university placement offices, other school districts, and colleagues. The candidates who wished to apply were interviewed by the intern and the assistant superintendent. A criteria rating scale based on district preferences and needs was developed by the intern to assist in decision making.

Other activities such as the annual and weekly salary breakdown chart, the salary and fringe benefits report, and the school calendar provided a variety of opportunities for knowledge acquisition and skill development for the intern.

4. What maintenance needs must be met?

The defeat of both proposals designed to provide the necessary funds to meet the increased costs of maintenance forced immediate reassessment of the priorities in this area. All facilities were visited by the superintendent, the assistant superintendent for business, the director of maintenance, and the intern to evaluate needs on a priority basis. Lists had been compiled by building administrators and staff members, and these too were reevaluated.
The public was highly aroused about the poor condition of the Central High School facility and would not be content with assurances that it would be high on the priority list. Meetings were held with the parents of Central High students and a committee was formed for the purpose of upgrading the school's appearance. The goal was to tackle minor maintenance jobs in order that custodians and maintenance crews could do the major things.

Administrators, parents, teachers, and students became involved. Materials were donated or offered at cost to workers who volunteered their time. Though it required time to meet with these concerned groups, and energy and effort to coordinate their activities, the pride and satisfaction gained by all involved resulted in positive feelings about the school system. The skillful handling confidence in the fiscal responsibility of the school administration.

5. Should there be another millage election?

Many conversations both public and private centered upon whether or not another millage election should take place, for this latest defeat had been the second within a nine month time. Since it was necessary to file for an election date forty days prior to the election, the superintendent and the intern visited the county clerk's office to file, should the district decide to go to the voters
a third time.

Members of the community offered to canvas the school district to determine the mood of the voters. It was decided that unless the evidence was overwhelming in favor of another election, and that it was certain that the vote would be positive, no election would be scheduled.

Several board members said they were opposed to going for another levy. They felt that the community was "tired out" after two millage campaigns and that school supporters didn't have the energy to begin a third. The superintendent expressed his feelings that the people should live with a second-class program and see how they like it. They had not had to discover yet what that would mean.

Obviously many other issues surfaced during this period of time, and the intern was exposed to many facets of the internal operation of a large school district that might not otherwise have been evident. Only a few were selected to give the reader a taste of the character of the internship as it developed on a daily basis.
CHAPTER IV

ACHIEVEMENT OF THE OBJECTIVES

Though the prospectus itself did not determine the character of the internship, nor did it provide a framework within which the intern did operate, the objectives given therein were achieved. Much more knowledge was acquired, many more technical skills were developed or strengthened, and a deeper awareness of the human element in the leadership process was achieved than was planned for or anticipated. Since events occurred so rapidly, and knowledge needed to be assimilated and applied readily, it would be relatively impossible to provide the reader with a comprehensive list in each category. A few objectives have been selected as indicators of the growth experienced by the intern.

CONCEPTUAL OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the conceptual framework within which each central office administrator must operate.

   Knowledge was acquired by reading board policies and district publications and communications. Through study of these materials and discussions with central office administrators, it was possible to clarify the district's educational philosophy, goals, and objectives. Attending all board meetings and central office staff meetings was also helpful.
2. **To become knowledgeable regarding the area of responsibility of each central office administrator.**

Information was gathered regarding responsibilities unique to each position in several ways: reading board policies, reading district newsletters, reviewing professional literature relating to the position, studying program descriptions, and acquainting one's self with processes and procedures through written materials and discussion with persons involved. The following areas were of special interest: the staff evaluation process, the staff reduction procedure, curriculum change process, budget development, the maintenance program, and public relations.

The intern was trusted with any and all information, no matter how critical. School personnel were encouraged to provide the intern with any information they could provide, fact or opinion, and they did so. It should be noted that knowledge was not acquired as an end in itself, but to facilitate problem solving and decision making. The intern was expected to have objective and subjective data assimilated prior to meetings with various publics in order to respond meaningfully when given the opportunity to contribute.

**TECHNICAL OBJECTIVES**

1. **To review the physical facilities of the district and**
compile a list of maintenance needs.

This was accomplished with the assistance of the Assistant Superintendent for Business. The director of maintenance, building principals, and custodians provided input. Lists made by various groups, including parents, were compared to the central office list and priorities were established.

2. To prepare a school calendar for the 1980-81 school year.

This task was assigned with the purpose of reducing the number of half days of instruction for students. The transportation costs were reduced through this plan, but inservice opportunities for staff were decreased. Public support was a key issue as parents had expressed their dissatisfaction with previous calendars. It was to the advantage of the intern to be able to accomplish the task as directed, without having all the historical, subjective data which others would have had to put into the background in order to meet the requirements.

In planning the calendar the following results were achieved:

a. Elementary half days were reduced from 12 to 5 and clock hours of instruction increased by 19.25.

b. Middle School half days were reduced from 16 to 7 and clock hours of instruction increased by 24.5.

c. High School half days were reduced from 14 to 9
and clock hours of instruction increased by 18.8.

3. **To fill a vacancy in the High School Spanish position.**

   The intern assumed full responsibility for recruiting candidates for this position. All contacts with placement offices and other school districts were accomplished during the third week of the internship. The interviewing process involved both the Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and the intern as was indicated in an earlier chapter. No direction was given to the intern and it was interesting to discover that the three top applicants suggested by both parties were the same.

4. **To gather data regarding volunteer programs in other school districts.**

   This task assigned by the superintendent was useful in establishing direction regarding the use of volunteers in place of paid employees. Building administrators recognized the need for this approach, but were cautious especially when contemplating playground supervision during the noon hour.

5. **To interpret transportation data in financial terms.**

   In reviewing routes, studying costs of vehicles and related expenses, and studying the master agreement with bus drivers, the true cost of a "Cadillac transportation system" was evident. Since the state was continuing to decrease its reimbursement percentage, this data was viewed
as critical. As a result, route changes did occur for the coming school year.

Many other technical objectives were attained as the intern was assigned a share of the responsibility for necessary information and expected to contribute as a participant in all staff activities. Skills relating to problem solving, decision making, communication, and improving inter-personal relationships were strengthened through the accomplishment of daily tasks of a technical nature, and the fulfillment of routine duties.

HUMAN OBJECTIVES

1. To project a positive attitude regarding the school district and the central office administration continuously.

   During this period of crisis management, when it was evident that public support was at a low point, it was critical that all personnel demonstrate their support for those making unpopular decisions which would affect many persons in an adverse manner. Confidence in the school administration needed to be stressed and not diluted in any way by thoughtless remarks or careless handling of questions expressed by the public.

2. To promote the issue of appropriate channels of communication during periods of staff unrest and low morale.
The intern was often employed as an impartial observer of key events and activities involving a variety of school personnel and other publics. To expedite problem solving and to reduce the perpetuation of possible mis-information, persons were directed to the proper link in the chain of communication and encouraged to route their comments and concerns through established channels.

3. To provide feedback to the central office staff regarding information for more effective operation.

The intern was immediately included in the conversations of not only the central office administration but others as well. This afforded people with an acceptable vehicle for transmitting their suggestions, concerns, complaints, etc. In many cases people who were not certain of their own position, felt the need to send out messages through someone else. The intern felt the obligation to listen without judging or evaluating, to clarify information not clearly stated, and to repeat only that which was meant to be shared. This was a vulnerable position and one to be used with sincere respect for the dignity and worthiness of human beings, as they became a part of this communication network.

This chapter is a brief statement regarding achievement of objectives considered to be representative of those tools useful to educational leaders. As in any situation of this kind, the intern has assimilated much more data
than is expressed in writing and has developed skills and abilities that will prove valuable though not addressed. The internship is certainly an opportunity to maximize the potential of individuals interested in organizational leadership.
This internship experience provided the intern with an opportunity to acquire firsthand knowledge regarding the realities of educational administration in a large school district. The value of observing very competent administrators perform their duties confidently and effectively during a high-stress period is difficult to measure.

The administrators of the Forest Hills School District, though experiencing a period of momentary crisis, continued steadfast in their commitment to a quality educational program for all students. Though under continuous pressure by the taxpayers to cut back on expenditures, those persons in leadership positions refused to lower district standards of excellence, and made every effort to guarantee to their constituents a competent staff and the instructional tools necessary for success in the classroom. In spite of criticism in the local newspapers, the Board of Education and the Superintendent proceeded calmly and confidently, maintaining a strong image worthy of the admiration and respect of its strongest critics.

Decisions were not always popular. Many people did not get their needs met. However, there was never any doubt about the fact that the challenges could be met, and that the persons in charge were extremely capable and certain
of meeting them.

Obviously there were many lessons to be learned by an intern in this setting. Circumstances permitted the intern with the opportunity to be more than an observer, to be more than someone assigned a task which would be an experiment in determining whether they had the potential of becoming a future superintendent or assistant superintendent. This was not a time for experimenting and "trying on of hats" as much as it was a time for doing what needed to be done to solve immediate problems, and to do so promptly, effectively, efficiently, and hopefully without error, as there was no time to waste.

It was fortunate that the intern had made a strong commitment to the school district and the university, and was willing to live in the Grand Rapids area during the entire time period. The days were long and the demands upon all central office administrators were unrelenting. In spite of the expenses entailed in renting an apartment for the summer months, it would have been nearly impossible to expend the necessary effort and energy for meaningful realistic involvement in this situation, should one have had to commute a long distance on a daily basis.

As can be seen in the daily log, (Appendix A), the intern was included in as many activities as possible, especially those involving the superintendent. Every effort was made on his part to guarantee the intern an opportunity as a superintendent, to think as a superintendent, to
observe as a superintendent and to react or respond as a superintendent. The intern was encouraged to read, observe, listen, problem solve, make decisions, assess, analyze, organize, articulate, etc. The intern was asked to evaluate or react to nearly every discussion, meeting, or activity in a thoughtful manner, providing an objective viewpoint, or possibly adding an idea that had not emerged as yet. What an opportunity for personal and professional growth this was!

The internship experience also broadened the intern's field of knowledge regarding the operation of a school district. A deeper awareness was created regarding the roles and responsibilities of those employed at many levels and their interrelationship. New information was gained regarding the cooperation of school systems within an intermediate school district, and how they can work together to meet the requirements placed upon them by the state. The intern developed a greater respect for the strong influence the media can have upon the climate in the community and an appreciation for the importance of providing correct data to the media and maintaining a positive relationship with them.

The fact that the Forest Hills School District was experiencing a period of turmoil exposed the intern to much more information that might otherwise have been the case.
Recommendations stemming from the experience of this intern are as follow:

1. The prospectus, though valuable, should not be so important as to limit the experiences an intern might have.

   When planning for an experience such as this, the intern has personal professional goals and objectives that are perceived to be desirable outcomes. The thought and preparation that is given to this exercise is valuable in assisting the individual in focusing upon the elements of the leadership process. It also provides an opportunity for self analysis, as one's skills and abilities are evaluated in terms of strengths and weaknesses. Accurate self assessment is a valuable skill to be developed. However, it would be detrimental should an individual participate in the internship experience solely bent on achieving the objectives outlined in the prospectus, and limit the selection of other activities available to them for that reason.

2. The receiving district or institution should be properly acknowledged by the university upon acceptance of the intern and given direction as to its responsibilities to the intern and to the university. The school district offers its resources to the university and to the intern unselfishly with the motivation to assume its responsibility in training future educational leaders. It
would enhance the image of the university and guarantee a more positive experience for the student if the assignment procedure was more professional.

3. During the internship the intern should be contacted and/or visited frequently by a member of the university staff. It is possible that an intern, though he/she could be potentially successful, may need support and direction from those who designed and implement the program. The district would feel more confident in providing opportunities for the intern knowing that both parties are offering appropriate feedback.

4. Upon termination of the internship, an opportunity for the intern, the university staff person, and the supervisor of the intern should have a conference regarding the achievement of objectives, the candidate's potential for success, and any other significant items that need to be discussed. All parties should know what is going to be discussed and when, several weeks prior to the meeting, and receive in writing a summary of the conference.

5. The cooperating district should receive a letter of appreciation from the university and the intern, a monetary token of gratitude, and/or a certificate or plaque of recognition. The intern does pay tuition for this experience and the district serves as a vehicle for instruction that the university did not provide.
As has been said previously, the internship requirement has limitless value as an opportunity for realistic application of knowledge and skills. It has no rival.
APPENDIX A

DAILY LOG OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE
DAILY LOG OF THE INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCE

June 17, 1980

8:00 a.m. Introduction to central office staff.
9:00 a.m. Meeting of administrative staff.
1:00 p.m.-
4:00 p.m. Tour of community education/media service facility.
8:00 p.m.-
11:45 p.m. Meeting of Board of Education.

June 23, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
5:00 p.m. Tour of all physical plants, observation of summer school program, observation of on-site teacher education workshop, tour of neighborhoods, reviewed board policies and report on November millage defeat.
7:30 p.m.-
10:30 p.m. Work session with the community on proposed budget reductions.

June 24, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
12:00 p.m. Developed week's schedule, studied board policies relating to personnel, met with assistant superintendent for instruction on goal-setting strategies.
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1:00 p.m.-
4:30 p.m. Administrative picnic
7:30 p.m.-
10:30 p.m. Work session with community.

June 25, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
12:00 p.m. Reviewed Budget Development Process Booklet,
Trip to office of County Clerk to set tentative millage election, visit to Central High School.
12:00 p.m. Lunch with superintendent and high school principal.
1:00 p.m.-
4:00 p.m. Administrative meeting.

June 26, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
12:00 p.m. Called placement offices.
12:00 p.m. Lunch with secretaries.
1:00 p.m.-
4:30 p.m. Developed first calendar proposal, discussions with assistant superintendents for personnel and business, assisted assistant high school principal with problem with a parent.
4:30 p.m.-
5:30 p.m. Reviewed with superintendent.
June 27, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
4:00 p.m. Worked in home district. (trade-off date for 6/19/80)

June 30, 1980

9:00 a.m.-
4:00 p.m. Staff Development Seminar with Drs. Dick Foster and Tom Ryan from Western Michigan University.

7:30 p.m.-
11:00 p.m. Board of Education meeting.

July 1, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
5:00 p.m. Developed second calendar proposal.

July 2, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
12:00 p.m. Battle Creek for husband's operation.
1:00 p.m.-
5:00 p.m. Salary ranking chart assigned by assistant superintendent for personnel.

July 3, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
5:00 p.m. Completed salary ranking chart for administrative staff.
July 7, 1980

8:00 a.m.

11:30 a.m. Finalized second calendar for board approval.

12:00 p.m.

1:30 p.m. Luncheon meeting with superintendent and assistant superintendents for personnel and business.

1:30 p.m.

5:30 p.m. Discussions preparatory for board meeting, discussion with superintendent regarding record keeping, membership in professional organizations and recommended professional journals.

July 8, 1980

8:30 a.m.

11:30 a.m. Placement calling.

11:30 a.m.

1:30 p.m. Luncheon meeting with superintendents of ISD regarding special education funding.

6:00 p.m.

7:00 p.m. Organizational meeting of Board of Education

7:30 p.m.

10:30 p.m. Parent meeting.

July 9, 1980
8:00 a.m. Meeting at Central High School regarding guidance staff changes.

9:30 a.m. Meeting with contact representative regarding Employee Assistance Programs.

1:30 p.m. Meeting regarding High School Vocational Education program changes.

7:30 p.m. Parent meeting regarding volunteering and/or raising money for the school district.

July 10, 1980

9:00 a.m. Region II Superintendents Meeting

11:30 a.m.-

1:30 p.m. Lunch regarding special education staffing

2:00 p.m.-

4:00 p.m. Meeting with Central High School parents regarding condition of physical plant.

July 11, 1980

8:30 a.m.-

11:30 a.m. Meeting of Central Office Staff

July 14, 1980

8:30 a.m.-

11:30 a.m. Work with assistant superintendent for business to consolidate staff list of maintenance needs, discussion of Food Service.

12:30 p.m.-

4:30 p.m. Visited Comstock Park Superintendent's office
4:30 p.m.-
7:00 p.m. Dinner with family of Comstock Park's superintendent.
7:30 p.m.-
9:30 p.m. Comstock Park Board of Education meeting.

July 15, 1980

8:30 a.m.-
11:30 a.m. Parent meeting with volunteers to improve Central High School, tour of Central High School.
12:00 p.m.-
2:00 p.m. Luncheon meeting with superintendents of Sparta Schools and of Comstock Park Schools.
2:30 p.m.-
4:30 p.m. Visited Comstock Park Schools to follow up Board Meeting.
7:30 p.m.-
11:15 p.m. Forest Hills Board of Education meeting.

July 16, 1980

8:00 a.m.-
5:00 p.m. Interviewed applicants for Spanish position, discussed "Organizing Human Potential" with assistant superintendent for instruction, toured Central High School to observe parents working.
July 17, 1980

8:30 a.m.-

5:00 p.m. Interviewed applicants for Spanish position, devised criteria ranking chart.

July 18, 1980

8:00 a.m.-

5:00 p.m. Professional reading, informal visiting.

July 21, 1980

8:00 a.m.-

5:00 p.m. Professional reading, informal visiting, lunch with elementary building principal.

July 22, 1980

8:00 a.m.-

5:00 p.m. Typed notes on professional reading, ordered pamphlet for Gull Lake secretaries.

July 23, 1980

8:00 a.m.-

5:00 p.m. Discussion with assistant superintendent for business on various issues, visited Bus Transportation Office, traveled bus routes.

July 24, 1980

7:30 a.m. Board Curriculum Committee meeting

8:30 a.m.
8:30 a.m.-
11:30 a.m. Discussion with assistant superintendents for business and personnel regarding their specific positions.

11:30 a.m.-
12:30 p.m. Lunch with secretaries.

11:30 p.m.-
4:30 p.m. Reviewed board policies and other district communications regarding staff evaluation, discussed applicants for Spanish position with high school principal.

July 25, 1980

8:30 a.m.-
5:00 p.m. Worked on Scott Foresman readability materials

July 28, 1980

8:30 a.m.-
9:30 a.m. Discussion with superintendent and board attorney regarding arbitration case.

9:30 a.m.-
11:30 a.m. Central Office Staff meeting

12:00 p.m.-
4:30 p.m. Lunch and afternoon with superintendent.

July 29, 1980

9:30 a.m.-
11:30 a.m. Arbitration hearing and preliminary discussion
July 30, 1980

8:30 a.m.  Discussion with assistant superintendent for instruction regarding curriculum change process, central office meeting.

11:30 a.m. Meeting with assistant superintendent for instruction, media services director and superintendent.

2:00 p.m.  

July 31, 1980

8:30 a.m.  

5:00 p.m.  Follow up of July 30 meetings, visited summer programs, toured new housing developments, special luncheon for director of communications whose job was eliminated.

August 1, 1980

8:00 a.m.  

4:00 p.m.  Last day review of total experience.

August 19, 1980

7:30 p.m.  

10:30 p.m. Meeting of Forest Hills Board of Education.

September 16, 1980

7:30 p.m.  

10:30 p.m. Meeting of Forest Hills Board of Education.
April 14, 1981

8:30 a.m. -
5:00 p.m. Visit of all physical plants, informal visitation with administrators and teachers, Central Office Staff meeting, meeting with administrative staff.

7:30 p.m. -
10:20 p.m. Meeting of Board of Education.
APPENDIX B
ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART
FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

ADMINISTRATIVE ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Board of Education

Superintendent

Asst Supt/Business

Asst Supt/Personnel

Region II Special Education Director

Asst Supt/Instruction

Director of Driver Ed

Director of Guidance

Director of Special Education

Director of Vocational Education

Director of

Elementary

Middle School

High School

Director of Community Ed

Principals

Principals

Principals

Assistant Principals

Assistant Principals
APPENDIX C

GENERAL FUND OPERATING BUDGET WORKSHEET

48
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<td>TOTAL Other</td>
<td>$51,000</td>
<td>$146,500</td>
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<td>TOTAL GENERAL FUND</td>
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<td>$10,705,150</td>
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APPENDIX D

CERTIFICATED STAFF FOR 1980-81
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ada Elementary</strong></td>
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<td>K-5 classroom teachers</td>
<td>21.0</td>
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<td>558—a pupil/classroom</td>
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<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>teacher ratio of</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Art</td>
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<td>Transitional (K-1)</td>
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<td>(Spec Ed)</td>
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<td>teacher ratio of 23.5 to 1</td>
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<td>13.5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Middle School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>814-a pupil/classroom teacher ratio of 25.7 to 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-8 classroom teachers</td>
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<td></td>
<td>455-a pupil/classroom teacher ratio of 24.6</td>
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<td>25.4</td>
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<td>Central High School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1,030-a pupil/classroom teacher ratio of 27.4 to 1</td>
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<tr>
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<td>48.3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Media Director</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td></td>
<td>34.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northern High School</td>
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<td>705-a pupil/classroom teacher ratio of</td>
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### Projected Enrollment for 1980-81

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<td>Media Director</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Special Services**

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<tr>
<td>Psychologists</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social Workers</td>
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<td>Speech Therapists</td>
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<td>P.O.H.I.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>9.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>6.5</strong></td>
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25.6 to 1

6/17/80
**FOREST HILLS PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
GRAND RAPIDS, MICHIGAN

1980-81 SCHOOL CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| September 2   | Teacher orientation  
                 All staff/no students                                                   |
| September 3   | First day for students  
                 Full day                                                               |
| September 26  | Official membership day  
                 (4th Friday)                                                          |
| October 16 & 17| No school for students  
                 Parent-teacher conferences  
                 (2 days elem/middle school parent-teacher conferences;  
                 1½ days high school parent-teacher conferences and ½ day high school staff inservice) |
| November 7    | End of first quarter attendance period                                 |
| November 27 & 28| Thanksgiving vacation                                                  |
| December 24- January 2| Winter vacation (vacation begins at end of school day,  
                 December 23 - school resumes January 5)                             |
| January 20    | Elementary students in school  
                 full day, Middle school/high school students AM only (middle school staff inservice in PM; high school staff grading exams in PM) |
| January 21    | Elementary students in school  
                 full day, Middle school/high school students AM only (middle school staff inservice in PM; high school staff grading exams in PM) |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Days</th>
<th>Teacher Workdays</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Days</th>
<th>Workdays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January 22</td>
<td>All students in school AM only (elem/middle school staff inservice in PM; high school staff grading exams in PM) End of second quarter attendance period</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>45</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 23</td>
<td>No school for students -- teacher record marking day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January 26</td>
<td>Second semester begins</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 27</td>
<td>End of third quarter attendance period</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 30-</td>
<td>Spring vacation (vacation begins at end of school day, March 27 -- school resumes April 6)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 3</td>
<td>All students in school AM only (parent-teacher conferences in PM)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>April 15 &amp; 16</td>
<td>All students and staff in school AM only</td>
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<tr>
<td>April 17</td>
<td>All students and staff in school AM only</td>
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<tr>
<td>May 25</td>
<td>Memorial Day</td>
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<td>June 5</td>
<td>Elementary students in school full day, Middle school/high school students AM only (middle school staff inservice in PM; high school staff grading exams in PM)</td>
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<td>June 8</td>
<td>Elementary students in school full day, Middle school/high school students AM only (middle school staff inservice in PM; high school staff grading exams in PM)</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>All students in school AM only (elem/middle school staff inservice in PM; high school staff grading exams in PM) Last day for students</td>
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<td>Date</td>
<td>Event Description</td>
<td>Instruction Days</td>
<td>Teacher Workdays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 9</td>
<td>End of fourth quarter attendance period</td>
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<tr>
<td>June 10</td>
<td>Teacher record marking day - full day for staff</td>
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<td>Adopted 7/8/80</td>
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APPENDIX F

LETTER TO FOREST HILLS ADMINISTRATORS FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT
Last night the Board of Education met and elected its officers for the 1980-81 school year. The officers are:

President - Charles Anderson
Vice-President - Bruce Debes
Secretary - Candy Hinshaw

I am pleased with these officers and look forward to another exciting year in Forest Hills. In my opinion, the Board will continue to deal with issues and reach decisions based upon the facts and what is best for children -- and not fall into the trap of permitting personal differences on certain items to interfere with smooth operation of the school district. I am certain that we will see many divided votes during the coming year; however, I believe that this can (and must) be viewed as a strength of the Board. Unfortunately, the lack of opposition from individual Board members in the past three years to most proposals was perceived by some citizens and staff to mean that the Board was simply a "rubber stamp" for the administration. Those of you who have followed Board activities closely know that individual Board members frequently challenged administrative thinking and helped us make valuable changes in our proposals. Hindsight is beautiful! But as all of us followed the activities of our school leaders carefully during the last three years, we know how capable the Forest Hills Board of Education was...is...and will be in dealing with the tough issues facing this school community.

On Monday, June 30, the Board voted four to three to direct the administrative staff to reinstate extracurricular activities into the school program for the 1980-81 school year. In light of previous Board action, that was a particularly difficult decision and each person had a hard time determining how he or she would vote. I support the Board of Education's decision: At this time, it is our task as administrators and staff to implement the action of the Board to the best of our ability. It is not
appropriate to second-guess the Board, to call it irresponsible, or to state that it jeopardizes the Board's credibility.

We can implement the Board's decision and provide a balanced program for all children in Forest Hills. Painful reductions will have to be made. They will be made...and during the 1980-81 school year, one of our tasks will be to prove to Forest Hills voters that these reductions do restrict the education of their children. We cannot take the time to second-guess past decisions, but we must face today's challenges and turn them to the advantage of children. I want action and support...and I do not have time to deal with staff who resist the changes which must be made. We must continue to challenge and ask questions, but then WE, as administrators, MUST DO THE JOB!

jc

cc: Board of Education
BIBLIOGRAPHY


