

TUCSON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ROBERT D. MORROW EDUCATION CENTER

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TUCSON, ARIZONA 85717

November 17, 1976

TO: NCA EXAMINING TEAM

FROM: AL SLAWSON, DIRECTOR
PROJECT M.O.R.E.

Enclosed in this packet are materials prepared for your reading in advance of our on-site examination. The intent in preparing these materials is to give you a general idea of how we are trying to meet each of the twelve standards. Additional materials will be available for your reading during your visit. Hopfully you will be able to frame some general questions or identify some areas for in-depth study from perusing this information.

Also included is a revised visitation schedule. Dr. Thomas Lee, Superintendent, is unable to meet with you on Tuesday afternoon, so it was necessary to move this up to Monday afternoon.

I wish you a pleasant Thanksgiving holiday and look forward to your examination and visit.

Project M O R E

More Opportunities for Relevant Education
Models and Options for Renewing Education
Many Other Roads to Education

STANDARD I: Institutional Purpose

Attached you will find the following:

- 1.0. Task Force Statement
The acceptance of this report by the Board of Education officially established the District's commitment to alternative/optional programs.
- 2.0. Project M.O.R.E. Philosophy
- 3.0. Project M.O.R.E. Goals
These goals have been restated twice in our four and one half years of existence.
- 4.0. Cover page to Project M.O.R.E. Application Packet

STANDARD II: Organization, Administration, Control, and Decision Making

The task force, whose recommendation led to the establishment of Project M.O.R.E., was initiated by the Superintendent and Board of Education. To date all the funding for this program has come from the School District's budget. The task force recommended to the Board this type of funding. It was the only way the Board's commitment to providing options could be measured by professional staff willing to take the risk of involvement in something new and unknown.

The relationship between Project M.O.R.E. and central administration is pretty much the same as it is for the nine regular high schools. The only difference is in the manner we build our yearly budget. We budget like District-wide support departments by listing instructional items requested and justifying the request. The regular schools, with their larger enrollments, are allocated instructional budget based on a per pupil allotment. While our way is more work it has its benefits by allowing us to secure sufficient supplies and materials for a small school population. We wouldn't be able to function very well on a per pupil allotment.

As part of a public school system we must abide by established policies of the Board of Education and administrative regulations of central administration. In both cases exceptions are made for justifiable reasons.

Project M.O.R.E. is staffed with a Director (Principal responsibilities), Assistant Director (Assistant Principal), Counselor, six Teacher/Advisors, one half time Teacher (Art teacher shared with the Special Classes High School), five teacher aide positions and a fluctuating number of volunteers and student teachers.

Each teacher/advisor is responsible for instruction and academic/career advising for up to thirty-five students. These advisees are registered for their teacher/advisor's house. This insures daily contact between advisor and advisee.

Decisions are made by the person(s) who have responsibility for implementation and who will be held accountable for final results. Effort is made through weekly staff meetings, daily house/advisee meetings and periodic three-way conferences to insure everyone input in the decision making process. All staff meetings are open to any member of the M.O.R.E. community. Project M.O.R.E.'s student representatives to the District-wide Student Advisory Council are expected to attend all weekly staff meetings.

In past years we held monthly Town Hall meetings, open to students, parents, and staff, to discuss issues of mutual concern. Since occupying our present quarters we haven't had a large enough room to accommodate this type of meeting. We tried meeting in a near by elementary school but this seemed to inhibit attendance. In the next few weeks we will have remodeled an adjacent building into a multipurpose room and plan to start Town Hall meetings again.

The District's business office provides guidelines for all budgetary procedures, but gives the school authority to administer its discretionary budget. Project M.O.R.E.'s administration does so with input from the staff.

The NCA's criteria and standards are followed in granting credit at M.O.R.E. Graduation is achieved by accumulating a total of nineteen credits with the following required subjects to be included.

English	4.0	credits
P.E.	2.5	credits
Free Enterprise	.5	credits
Social Studies	2.0	credits
Math	2.0	credits
Science	2.0	credits

Project M.O.R.E. maintains the following records for each student:

1. Attendance record
2. Permanent record - a record of all grades and credits earned
3. Cumulative folder
4. Advisory folder - generally contains information on current registration and samples of student's work

Currently all Project M.O.R.E. students remain inactively enrolled at a home school, the home school being the school the student would normally attend. That school maintains a permanent record of all the grades and credits earned by the student. Project M.O.R.E. provides the home school with a record of those grades and credits at the end of each quarter. A transcript of grades and an explanation of their meaning is mailed to requesting parties.

STANDARD III: Educational Program

The heart of the instructional program is the teacher/advisor and house concepts. Houses are scheduled two hours per day, five days per week. Students may earn up to three graduation credits in the house in areas designated by the teacher, that relate to its instructional focus. Each house designates one meeting per week to focus on Human Relations activities that assist students in clarifying their values and developing a positive self-concept.

There is a high value placed on individualized instruction. Students are encouraged to explore and develop their individual interests and talents.

This year we have established a Communications Lab for both remedial and advanced work in reading and writing skills.

Teachers have prepared competency projects which students work on voluntarily at their own pace. Students may also, with teacher guidance, write their own competency project in any academic area.

Students may choose from a variety of structures within the Project. Houses and four day per week classes offer the most rigid structure. Two and one day per week classes/seminars provide a combination of structure and individual study. Independent study through contracts and competency projects offer the least structure. Structure is present, to some degree, in all Project M.O.R.E.'s instructional activities.

We have had an on going staff in-service program since Project M.O.R.E.'s inception.

Summer 1973 - Four weeks

Summer 1974 - Two weeks

Summer 1975 - One week

Summer 1976 - One week

In addition to the above blocks of time we average at least one in-service meeting monthly for either staff or program development.

STANDARD IV: Student Selection and Individual Assessment

Participation in Project M.O.R.E. is voluntary and the final decision of whether not to enroll rest in the hands of the student and his or her parents. The program is open to any student who meets the following criteria:

1. The student resides within the boundaries of Tucson District 1.
2. If the student lives outside the District, he/she may participate by paying the tuition normally required of out of district students.
3. The student must be actively enrolled in school the quarter preceding their admission to Project M.O.R.E.
4. The student must complete Project M.O.R.E.'s application process.

Although the program is open to all who meet the above criteria, it is designed primarily to meet the needs of a specific group of students. Generally described, they are the students who find the traditional structure inhibiting and who, if given more freedom and flexibility have the initiative, motivation, and self-discipline to help design and organize their courses of study, to creatively find legitimate alternatives to normal classroom instruction, and be responsible for structuring and using a significant portion of each days work without direct supervision by a staff member.

The steps in our application process have changed over the four and one half years of operation, but the function and purpose have remained the same. The process is designed to insure that students and parents clearly understand the program and its expectations so that they can make an informed decision about participating in the Project. The steps in the process are detailed in attachment number 1.

When the application process has been completed and the application accepted, the student will be admitted at the beginning of the next quarter. Experience showed that students entering the program without a thorough orientation had difficulty adjusting. By admitting students in groups at the beginning of each quarter, a well planned two day orientation can be carried out. Students who go through this orientation adjust better and more quickly than those who were admitted during the quarter without the benefit of the orientation.

When a student is having difficulty or cannot adjust to the program he or she is placed into our Maintenance Process (see attachment number 2). This process facilitates the collection of data pertinent to the situation. It also brings staff, student, and parents together to make an informed and appropriate decision about the students continuation in the program or to consider another educational option. A move to another school or program can be made easily and without prejudice to the student.

Students from all of the District's nine high schools make up Project M.O.R.E.'s student body. Our enrollment policy (see attachment number 3) seeks to insure that students from each of the schools have equal opportunity

and access to the program. This is done by assigning openings in the program on a quota basis according to the size of each school's enrollment. Also, in an attempt to get a racial and ethnic mix, a percentage of positions in the Project are reserved for minorities equal to the percentage that they represent in the total population of the District.

By clearly identifying the students we seek to serve, we have been able to design programs, curriculum, and learning environments to meet our students needs.

Students come to our program with varying degrees of self-directedness. A look at the structures offered to students at Project M.O.R.E. reveals a continuum running from the house, very structured, to graduation contracts which is completely independent study. In between these two poles are classes, seminars, competency projects, centers, and independent study. Each step up in the order requires more self direction on the part of the student who participates in that structure.

Once a student is enrolled, the advising process begins. The student's transcript is reviewed to determine graduation requirements. The student is then assigned an advisor based on his choice of a curriculum house. After the initial task of establishing rapport with the student, the faculty advisor begins the assessment phase of advising. This assessment includes the gathering of facts about the student's past school experiences, achievements, present abilities, and future interests and desires. This assessment is made through the use of the following sources:

1. the student (student conference)
2. school sources (cumulative records, test data, anecdotal records, transcripts, and references)
3. advisor (observations, impressions, and experiences)
4. further assessment (16 PF, Metropolitan Reading Test, etc.)
5. a parent conference - the major goal in this assessment is to identify patterns of behavior, interest, and/or achievement that may have implications for later planning and decision making.

Once the initial assessment is completed the student and his advisor identifies and lists some tentative goals in the following three categories:

1. Academic goals
2. Social goals
3. Personal goals

This is recorded on the student profile sheet. After reviewing the student profile, courses are surveyed, selected and/or designed to best fill the student's individual needs. During and upon completion of a quarter an evaluation is made by the student and advisor in terms of the student's needs, interest, and achievements.

STANDARD V: Professional Staff

All professional staff members meet NCA and state requirements for their areas of primary responsibility. With a staff as small as Project M.O.R.E. it is necessary for some teachers to assume responsibility in academic areas for which they don't fully meet NCA and state requirements. These teachers have the planning assistance of other Project M.O.R.E. and District personnel, a benefit of being part of a large urban school district.

A unique feature of Project M.O.R.E. is the manner by which staff is selected. All candidates for any position first meet with a screening team composed of students, parents, and staff whose responsibility is to determine if this person has the type of personal qualities necessary to work harmoniously at Project M.O.R.E. Candidates receiving a positive recommendation of the screening team are then invited back for interviews with the Project Director, Assistant Director, and teachers where appropriate. Candidates receiving a negative recommendation of the screening team are excluded from any further consideration. In the case of teacher aide applicants they are interviewed by the teacher or staff member they will be working with. The teacher or staff member makes a decision and recommendation to the Project Director for hiring.

An effort has been made to provide ethnic representation and balance throughout the staff.

Orientation for new staff is the primary responsibility of their immediate supervisor. In the case of professional staff, orientation is an integral part of in-service activities.

STANDARD VI: School Climate

Each student is assigned to a house which meets daily for both academic and social involvement. The house gives the student a "home base" and provides structured experience in values clarifications and human growth and development.

The house teacher is also the student's academic/career advisor. Through this advisor the student identifies program and career goals and arranges a program of studies to achieve those goals.

In all houses and many of the classes/seminars the student chooses from a "menu" of credit choices. In this manner we provide for the integration of academic areas.

Each house, class, and seminar the student may also choose between working for a grade or credit/no credit.

Open communication between students, parents, and staff is promoted through planned three-way conferences and Town Hall meetings. Town Hall is a general meeting to discuss an issue of mutual concern. Due to a lack of adequate meeting space the last year and one half Town Hall meetings haven't been held. We will shortly have remodeled an adjacent building into a multipurpose room and have planned to resume Town Hall meetings in January, 1977. These meetings will be sponsored by the School Community Partnership Council.

Students have a direct voice and representation at Board of Education meetings and Project M.O.R.E. staff meetings. Project M.O.R.E. is entitled to two representatives elected by the students, on the District's Student Advisory Council. These same representatives are expected to sit in all staff meetings.

STANDARD VII: The Community Context

Students, staff, and parents are involved in decision making and various cooperative efforts formally through the following program structures:

1. Three-way conferences - Student and parent make decisions relative to the student's program.
2. Advisory group/houses - Students and teacher make decisions relative to class content and activities.
3. Staff Meeting - Staff makes decisions relative to curriculum structure and Project M.O.R.E. needs.
4. Town Hall - Students, staff, and parents explore issues of mutual concern.
5. Student Advisory Council - Students decide what issues on which they wish to advise Board of Education.
6. School Community Partnership Council - Parents and interested community persons meet to discuss issues of common concern and advise Board of Education of their wishes.

The Project M.O.R.E. curriculum makes use of the "school without walls" concept by both bringing community volunteers into class activities and allowing students to participate in community based learning activities.

STANDARD VIII: Student Services

Staffing

Project M.O.R.E. has a full time counselor and a half-time counselor aide. Each of the six instructors also serve as faculty advisors. Graduate students in Counseling and Guidance at the University of Arizona have served their practicum experience at Project M.O.R.E. Counselors from outside agencies, mainly Matrix, a preventive drug abuse program, and the Youth Services Bureau, a delinquency preventive program, have continual contact and access to our students.

Facilities

Project M.O.R.E.'s counselor, counselor aide, and faculty advisors have offices for private consultation with students and parents. The school also has a Self Center and Resource Center to house guidance materials used by the staff and students.

Materials

Project M.O.R.E. has a collection of materials for the purpose of assisting students, faculty, advisor, and counselors in providing guidance and counseling services.

Psychometric Measurements

For assessing achievement, the school has and uses the Metropolitan Achievement Test for reading, mechanics of writing, math, science, and social studies. Each student has on file in the Communications Lab and in their cumulative record, a summary of all test data and evaluations made while enrolled in District 1 school system.

For vocational or career exploration, the school has available the Holland Self-Directed Search and the Strong Vocational Interest.

Inventory

For counseling, the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory has been used and the school is currently studying the use of the 16 Personality Factor Inventory as a counseling tool for independent study readiness and motivation.

College Information

Project M.O.R.E. maintains a collection of college catalogs and directories. The collection attempts to focus on schools within the state that are accessible and colleges and universities that offer programs that are non-traditional in approach.

The Self Center has available for students information and applications for the ACT and SAT examinations. The school code number and the date of examinations are posted.

Other Materials

The Self Center has available; a self pacing program of career exploration and identification for students who are undecided but highly motivated.

The Resource Center (library) has a variety of paperbacks that are currently popular in psychology and personal development and several tapes and film strips on interpersonal communication, transactional analysis, and other personal development subjects.

Services

Project M.O.R.E. delivers its student services through a system called the Maintenance Process.

Within the system, a full time counselor is responsible for providing and coordinating counseling and guidance services. The faculty advisors assess the student's needs and provides educational planning through the advising process.

Students are referred to the counselor when they have concerns that the faculty advisor does not have the time and/or expertise to deal with.

A variety of a approaches and resources are used to assist the students in achieving their goals. All students are involved in a Human Relations Class for personal development. All students and parents have conferences with the advisor to discuss the student's educational plans, progress, and concerns. Individual, small group, and parent converences are used for students who are experiencing some personal concern that interfere with their progress. A Communications Lab is used with students who need special help of remediation in reading and writing skills.

Supportive services provided by the school district are coordinated through the counselor who maintains continuous contact with the area's social worker. The social worker provides case work services and operates as a liason between Project M.O.R.E., the school psychologist, and special educational support teachers.

Students and parents are referred to outside community agencies when appropriate such as the Family Counseling Agency, Eastside Counseling Center, and special programs such as the Accomodation Program or Extended Day.

Health Services

Students are advised to have a physical examination by their family doctor when they enter high school. Arrangements are made for students unable to afford a physical from a private doctor to have a physical done at the Free Clinic of Tucson, Pima County Hospital, if eligibility requirements are satisfied, or Medi-Quick. A District-wide physician is available as necessary.

The school nurse is responsible for all follow-up on any health problems identified by the physical examination, advising and counseling students and parents and making referrals as necessary.

STANDARD X: Institutional Evaluation

At the start of Project M.O.R.E. the School District's Educational Program Analyst was assigned to develop an evaluation design and program. A general design and system to collect information was generally agreed upon. During our second year of operation a law suit filed against the District to provide equal educational opportunities for all students, necessitated reassigning the Program Analyst to assisting with the preparation of the School Districts defense. The staff continued to collect information, but became frustrated and confused with the design as the program continued to change. During the 1975-76 school year we developed an alternate design called Student Profile/Evaluation form. A copy is attached with explanation remarks in the evaluation boxes.

During the summer of 1976, each staff member spent one week, at District expense, collating and writing information and programs that have been developed up to that point. This volume is at the printers, as this is being written, and will be available for your reading at the time of your visit. It is a comprehensive report of how we have fulfilled one of our purposes, to develop or refine different curricular/program approaches.

STANDARD XI: Financial Support and Control

Project M.O.R.E.'s financial support comes from the same sources as does the support for all other District schools. There is no special federal or state funding. M.O.R.E. is unique among the high schools in that we budget as a department and not as a school. This allows us to make a budget request based on our needs as opposed to receiving per pupil allotments. Funding for the program has always been completely adequate.

Budgetary procedures as outlined by the District's business office are strictly adhered to and an in-school accounting system assures accountability for all funds requested, approved, and spent.

STANDARD XII: School Facilities

In the almost four years of Project M.O.R.E.'s existence the program has had three homes.

A pilot program with twenty-five high school seniors and four staff was started in the spring semester of 1973, in one classroom at Blenman Elementary School. For the 73-74 school year the teaching staff was expanded to its present size, the student population increased to one hundred students and the program moved to four vacant classrooms at Lineweaver Elementary School. Plans were made to move the program to a permanent site, University Heights Elementary School, for the 74-75 school year. The Board of Education decided to close that building as an elementary school due to declining enrollment. Community pressure was brought to bear on the Board and they reversed their decision. Project M.O.R.E. stayed at Lineweaver, added four portable classrooms and increased the enrollment to one hundred fifty students. In the spring of 1975 the M.M. Sundt Company, a construction firm, donated its office building to the School District. The District assigned Project M.O.R.E. to this facility for the 1975-76 school year and appropriate, minimal remodeling plans were made. Remodeling wasn't complete until late September 1975, so we started the year with borrowed space in two elementary schools and a City Parks and Recreation building. We were able to move into our present quarters late September 1975. The M.M. Sundt Company sold adjacent property with two usable buildings to the District in the spring of 1976. Currently we are remodeling one building into a multipurpose room and plan to remodel the other for our industrial education program. The rest of the land will be cleared for play and exercise area.

Our site is accessible to students. It is a five minute walk from a main bus route. Heating, cooling, toilet facilities, and storage are adequate. Classrooms are small but the additional space that will be available soon, will alleviate this problem to a degree.

Each teacher has their own office for preparation and conferences.