

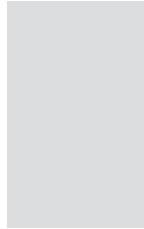
WESTON HISTORICAL SOCIETY BULLETIN

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Roxbury Weston Preschool and Weston METCO



*Above: Weston METCO Family Friends Kate Davies and Natalia Kennedy, Weston High School graduation 1996 (Courtesy Tony and Alice Davies).
Below: Lauren Marder with classmates Leah and Rasheed, Roxbury Weston Preschool, 1991. (Courtesy Mary Marder)*

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Logo, Weston METCO Scholarship Fund Inc.



Weston Metco Class of 2012. Back row: Geovanna Depina, Edom Wessenyeleh, Alexis Mundo, Tyler Toledano, Kayla Lawrence, and Rajathurai Nagarajah. Front Row: Shelby Jeffes, Rafael Senices, Jaeda Reid, Ayanna Hudson, and Jasmona Rice. Missing from photo: Marquis Williams. (From Weston METCO Scholarship Fund mailing 2012)

Introduction

This issue of *The Weston Historical Society Bulletin* will explore the history of Roxbury Weston Programs, Inc., established in 1966, and Weston METCO, established in 1967 and now celebrating its 50th anniversary.

These two voluntary school desegregation programs are related in their history and mission. Both grew out of the struggle for “Liberty and Justice for All” during the Civil Rights Movement, which challenged an all-pervasive system of racial discrimination, especially in the Deep South but also in Northern cities. In the New England town of Weston, a small group of committed residents took up the cause of improving race relations and addressing issues of inequality and injustice by connecting their white suburban community to residents of inner city Boston.

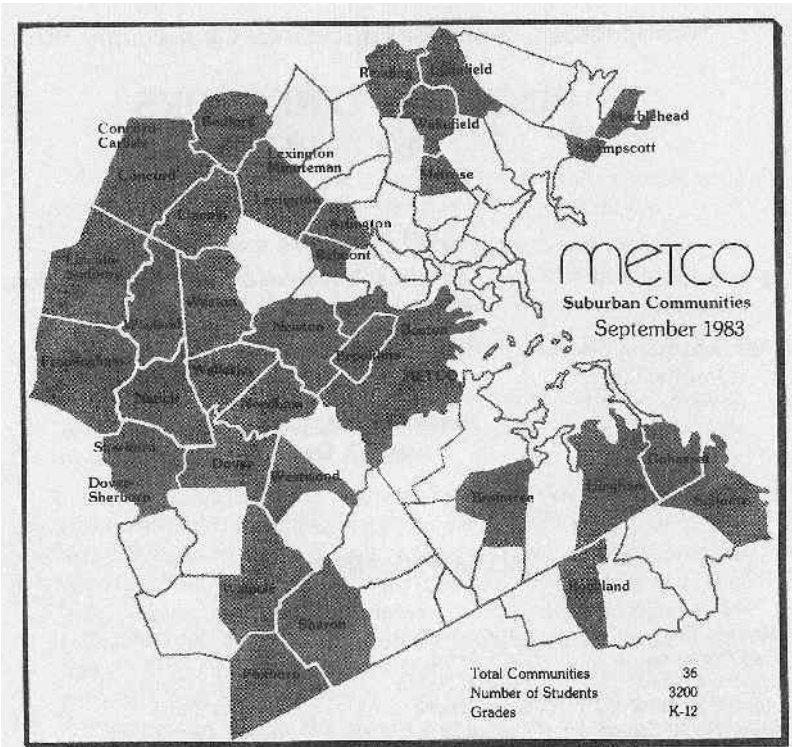
Roxbury-Weston Preschool describes itself as “the longest running, voluntarily integrated educational program in the country.” (1) The school’s brochure describes its mission as follows:

. . . creating educational opportunities to bring together urban and suburban children in a supportive, dynamic, and creative environment would lay the foundation for generations of adults who embody the principles of cooperation, understanding, and acceptance towards others. (2)

The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO) is “the longest continuously running voluntary school desegregation program in the nation and one of just a few of its kind.”(3) Funded since 1969 by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the grant program was created to provide a quality integrated public education for urban black and other minority children as well as new learning experiences for suburban children. Another goal is to foster closer understanding and

cooperation between urban and suburban parents and other residents of the Boston Metropolitan area.

Today, Weston is one of 31 METCO communities. Each METCO program is unique in size, geographical location, ethnic makeup, and dedication of its community. The Town of Lincoln has the highest percentage of Boston students. For the 2016-17 school year, Weston had 169 METCO students, or 8 percent of a total of 2,185 Weston Public School students. They come from a varied mix of backgrounds and neighborhoods including Roxbury, Dorchester, Hyde Park, and Jamaica Plain. The majority started in kindergarten; some were placed on the waiting list at birth. Ninety-nine percent of Weston-METCO students graduate, compared to 64% of Boston high school students. In 2016 and 2017, 100% of Weston METCO graduates were pursuing higher education.



Map showing METCO suburban communities in September 1983. At that time there were 3,200 METCO students in 36 participating school districts.

Background: The Civil Rights Movement

The following is a brief review of major milestones in the Civil Rights Movement up to 1965, the year that the integrated Camp Blue Hill opened in Weston.

- 1954:** Brown vs. Board of Education. U.S. Supreme Court outlaws segregation in public schools.
- 1955:** Civil rights protests spread across the south. The Montgomery, Alabama, bus boycott is sparked by the refusal of Rosa Parks to give up her bus seat to a white person.
- 1957:** A black girl is blocked from enrollment at Little Rock High School; nine students are subsequently enrolled under protection of U.S. Marshalls.
- 1960:** More than 70,000 black and white students participate in “sit ins” to protest a Greensboro, N. C., incident in which four blacks were denied service at a lunch counter.
- 1961:** “Freedom Riders” test segregation laws in the Deep South. Voter registration drives are organized.
- 1962:** James Meredith becomes the first black student to enroll at University of Mississippi.
- 1963:** Masses demonstrate for civil rights in Birmingham, Alabama; Martin Luther King leads first march on Washington, D.C.; President Kennedy is assassinated.
- 1964:** Civil Rights Act passed in Congress under the leadership of President Lyndon Johnson; Martin Luther King receives Nobel Peace Prize.
- 1965:** Martin Luther King leads huge march in Selma, Alabama, attended by Rev. Harry Hoehler of First Parish Church, Weston.

Boston Schools in 1964-65: Death at an Early Age

Editor’s Note: In a 2015 interview with Claudio Sanchez on NPR’s All Things Considered, teacher Jonathan Kozol looked back on the events he wrote about 50 years ago in his award-winning classic Death at an Early Age: The Destruction of the Hearts and Minds of Negro children in the Boston Public Schools. The following is quoted from a report on the interview entitled “Frozen in Time, Remembering the Students Who Changed a Teacher’s Life.”

Gibson Elementary served mostly black families and straddled the Roxbury and Dorchester neighborhoods just a few miles from downtown. The first day [Jonathan Kozol] started working there in the fall of 1964, he was stunned by what he saw. There was no heat in most classrooms. Plaster fell from the ceilings. The window frames had rotted away. With a few exceptions, Kozol says teachers were indifferent and cold toward children of whom they expected little. “Something about the presence of those African-American children brought out the worst in them,” he

said. . . .

By spring, Kozol had been assigned to a group of fourth-graders that nobody wanted. They had had nine substitute teachers the year before. “They were called the bad fourth grade,” says Kozol. Some could barely read or write. “I just would do anything to get them to want to read, to want to read something.” They weren’t interested in the Jane and Spot kind of textbooks the school wanted them to read. “So finally I settled on Langston Hughes,” said Kozol. “Probably the most respected black poet in America. One of the most respected poets period.”

One of Hughes’ poems in particular, “The Ballad of the Landlord,” mesmerized Kozol’s students. The poem opens with these lines:

*Landlord landlord my roof has sprung a leak.
Don't you 'member I told you about it
Way last week?*

*Landlord, landlord,
These steps is broken down.
When you come up yourself
It's a wonder you don't fall down.*

Kozol said it was the first time since he had started working with these kids that he had them on the edge of their seats: “A child who had been quite belligerent and not trusting of me came up and sort of touched my shoulder and asked me if she could bring that book home to show her mother the landlord poem.”

A few days later, the principal called Kozol into her office. She was incensed, says Kozol. She told him he was to leave that day and couldn’t say goodbye to his students. Kozol was fired on the spot for “curriculum deviation.” He was told he was unsuited for the highly responsible profession of a teacher.

When word of Kozol’s firing spread among parents, many wanted to show their displeasure. Thelma Burns, who still lives near the site of Gibson Elementary, says the principal refused to meet with them. So parents decided to picket the school and keep their kids out. “No one at the school would talk to us,” recalled Burns. “That’s the way it was at that time.” Burns credits Kozol and *Death at an Early Age* for making people aware of how black children were treated in some schools, and for bringing community leaders together, because a lot of people didn’t know what was going on. (4)



Campers and counselors play volleyball at Camp Blue Hill, an integrated summer day camp in Weston. (Photo from Boston Globe Magazine, August 13, 1967)

Roxbury Weston Programs

Camp Blue Hill and the Beginnings of Roxbury-Weston Programs, Inc.

by Harriet Elliston (c.1977)

Editor's Note: In 1965, a small group of determined Weston residents set out to improve race relations in their own community. They began by setting up a summer day camp for equal numbers of children from Weston and the inner city Boston neighborhood of Roxbury. This delightful reminiscence was written about 1977 by one of the founders, Harriet Elliston (c. 1905 - 2002), in the form of a conversation with her granddaughter, Lelia Orrell Elliston. As part of the program, campers visited the Elliston house at 263 South Avenue two days a week for "Nature."

"Tell me, Grandma, how did Roxbury-Weston start?" asked Lelia of the old lady, as the two worked their way down the row of raspberry bushes carefully picking the fragrant red fruit as they went. The berries, except for the occasional irresistible one popped into the mouth were to be sold for Roxbury Weston Programs, Inc.

“It seems a very long time ago now, although things haven’t really changed very much. In 1965, the time of the Civil Rights Movement, a great surge of feeling arose in the country, over the shameful denial of opportunity to black people. Good schools, good jobs to support their families, and good houses, and of course, the right to vote to bring about these things was denied by law.”

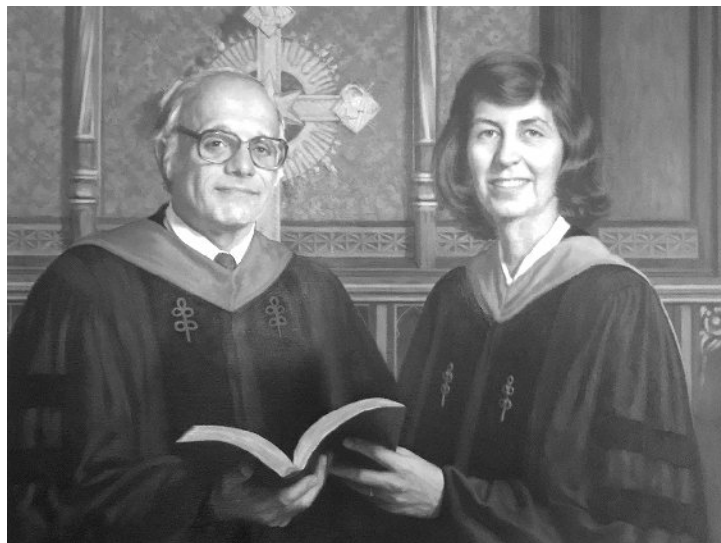
This was the time of the famous march in Selma, Alabama. Masses of people went to Selma to protest the jailing of black men and women who tried to vote, who went to eat in restaurants, drink at drinking fountains, and use rest rooms marked “White Only.”

Among those who went was Weston’s Harry Hoehler [minister of First Parish Church], with the backing of members of his parish. Mr. Hoehler can tell of the harassment by the sheriff, the jailings, and the police dogs that were set upon the marchers.

There was a great increase in awareness everywhere. In Weston, mothers and fathers (and grandmothers and grandfathers) looked around and realized that their children were cut off, isolated, in a town where they had virtually no opportunity to meet black children,

The next step was to do something about this. “How can we get in touch with some black children who live in Boston?” we thought. “Why not start a day camp, bringing children from the city to join with children in Weston.”

As a start, and because we had no experience, the mothers thought of planning a camp with twenty-five children from Roxbury to join with twenty-five children from Weston for a period of two or three weeks, spending part of the time doing things in the city and part of the time in Weston.



Rev. Harry Hoehler (First Parish minister 1964-1995) and his wife Judith (co-minister 1975-1995) were instrumental in establishing Camp Blue Hill, Roxbury Weston Programs, and Roxbury Weston Preschool. This painting by Richard Whitney hangs in the First Parish parlor.

Now we had to get in touch with somebody in Roxbury who might be interested in such a camp.

We went to Harry Hoehler, who in turn called Virgil Murdock of the Unitarian Universalists Benevolent Society. Mr. Murdock put the mothers and fathers in touch with Rev. Virgil Wood of the Blue Hill Christian Center located on Blue Hill Ave. and associated with Rev. Harvey Cox and Andover Newton Theological School in Newton. The Benevolent Society made a donation of \$400.00 [to support camp planning and development].

Virgil Wood listened with interest to the suggestion of a camp. He made a date to come to Weston to shape definite plans. He then went off on the Selma march. [March 1965] He returned early on the morning of the meeting in Weston after three almost sleepless nights. I can see him now, sitting in our comfortable arm chair, dressed in the blue denims of the marchers, his tooth brush sticking out of his breast pocket, and fighting to keep his eyes open. Imogene Fish, Nancy Baer, and your grandmother sat on the sofa opposite him. In spite of his exhaustion, Rev. Wood was so enthusiastic and dynamic that he soon had the numbers increased to 100 (50 from Roxbury and 50 from Weston) and the period to eight weeks. We ended the meeting slightly overwhelmed but confident that the camp, Camp Blue Hill, would be a success.

The Blue Hill Center had no difficulty in recruiting children and had its own bus. In Weston, our group was busy putting together a staff and making arrangements to set up the camp. Members of the Weston Committee at this point were Ken and Imogene Fish, Herb and Nancy Baer, Gene and Phyllis Ritvo, Jean and Steve Moulton, Mary and John Sullivan, Judy and Harry Hoehler, and Bill and Harriet Elliston. (Dr. Will Cochran volunteered his services as camp doctor—looking at throats, feeling stomach aches, and doing physical exams that had been overlooked by campers.) Mimi Hastings agreed to be treasurer. Members of the committee approached the School Committee and the Recreation Commission for help. The School Committee let us use the Case House and grounds for our base of activity. The Recreation Commission allowed us the use of the Swimming Pool at certain hours. Our Weston co-director of the camp was Anne Marie Cail, a sixth grade teacher in the Weston schools.

After numerous meetings of the Committee an excellent staff came into being, counselors, junior counselors, and volunteers from among the young people of Weston who wanted in some way to be part of the Civil Rights Movement. Artists and craftsmen offered their talents. Our beloved Pat Cole headed the art department; Torj Wray from Wayland came with clay to introduce pottery making. Carol Turnbull taught the children enameling and the making of pins, pendants, earrings, and dishes of brightly colored enamel on copper, the copper donated by Hector Osmond.

The Blue Hill Center was at the same time building up a splendid staff of counselors

and junior counselors equal in number to that of Weston. Their co-director was Ahurus Jackson, "Ajax," a young man of many talents, a divinity student at Andover Newton, warm and highly popular with the children, and able to drive the Blue Hill bus! In the summer, the working together of the counselors, black and white, was an important part of the program.

In that first year, the intention was to have the Blue Hill bus come to Weston, unload half of the city children, and take on the Weston children. Then the bus would go off and make trips to points of interest in the city and the M.D.C. swimming pools. This was for the purpose of getting a fair exchange of exposure to country and city activities. However, as time went on it became apparent that children got too tired riding the bus for such a long period and it was best to stay in one place.

Once the camp was rolling, the part that involved your grandfather and me was the visits that the children made to our place [the Elliston farm at 263 South Ave]. They were scheduled to come two days a week for "Nature." One half of the group went walking for one half of the time with me in the woods and fields where we collected flowers, insects, rocks, or anything of interest. These they took back to the camp for further study. The other half of the group went with your grandfather and played the "guessing game" seated around a table with one member blindfolded and given an object to identify through whatever senses were available to him. The question asked at the beginning was "How many senses do we have?" The campers listed the senses, five in number. Grandfather offered twenty-five cents to anyone who could list a sixth sense. Long thoughts followed and wild guesses. Finally a rather knowing child said, "There isn't a sixth sense, that is why he offered a quarter for it!"

Then we had "overnights" on the knoll behind the barn. After the campers had cooked their supper and settled their sleeping arrangements and dusk had turned into darkness, Grandfather took them to climb the big rock and look at the moon and stars. He had a long rope and every child held onto the rope in single file until they reached the top of the rock where they sat in the dark and looked toward the heavens. One little girl next to me came closer and, rolling her eyes toward me, whispered, "Any bears?"

Of course, as usual, there was the problem of money with all this going on. Even with so much volunteered and contributed to the camp, there were still many expenses to be met. The Committee had to raise money in addition to everything else.

The chief means of raising funds was from a letter sent out under the signatures of the clergymen of the churches of Weston, all giving their support to the program and urging citizens of the town to make a contribution also in support. In addition, we've had dances, peony parties, raspberry festivals, tennis tournaments, and very successful auctions.

The year after the camp started, when the camp had proved its value, the preschool



William and Harriet Elliston were among the founders of Camp Blue Hill in 1965 and Roxbury Weston Preschool in 1966. Their home at 263 South Avenue was used for camp nature programs and fundraising festivals.. (Courtesy Weston Historical Society)

program was started [in September 1966]. In large measure the existence of the Roxbury Weston Preschool was influential in the decision for Weston to join in METCO.

We in Weston are pleased that the camp has survived these twelve years and often think of the time, effort, and money contributed to it by so many people from both Weston and Roxbury. We know of no other program such as this that has survived as long.

The Founding of the Roxbury Weston Preschool: A Personal Reminiscence

by Rev. Judith Hoehler (1996)

Editor's note: Roxbury Weston Preschool grew out of the Camp Blue Hill summer day camp and continues today as "the longest running voluntary desegregation program in the country," according to the school's history. This 1996 history was written by Rev. Judith Hoehler, one of the founders. With her husband Rev. Harry Hoehler, Judith was co-pastor of First Parish Church in Weston.

The Roxbury Weston Preschool opened in September 1966 at St. Peter's Episcopal Church in Weston with eight Roxbury children and 16 children from Weston and Wayland. We were limited to eight youngsters from Roxbury because that was the number (eight plus an adult aide plus driver) who could be transported legally in a station wagon, and for the first year of the program, volunteers carpooled the

children between Weston and Roxbury.

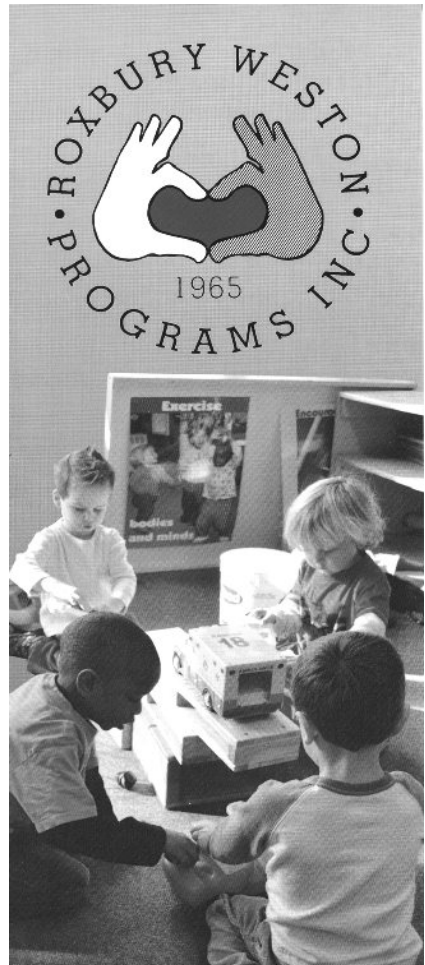
Why the preschool? Earlier in 1966, the Weston School Committee had turned down the invitation to become a part of METCO, the program to bus children from Boston's inner city schools to suburban public schools. The reason given by the School Committee was that the Boston children, not having had all the advantages of the Weston children, would not be able to keep up. Those of us who had begun the Roxbury-Weston Summer Day Camp in 1965—an eight week, five-day-a-week program serving 50 children from Roxbury and 50 children from Weston—knew the Roxbury children could be educated with Weston children to the advantage of both groups.

Spearheaded by Gay Fay (Mrs. Jay Fay), an ecumenical group organized the preschool to demonstrate this belief. The summer camp program was run in conjunction with the Blue Hill Christian Center in Roxbury, which also housed the Hill Top Head Start program; and it was from Hill Top that the first eight Roxbury children came to Weston.

A first-rate educational program from its inception, Roxbury Weston Preschool opened under the experienced direction of Director/Teacher Julie Bauer. Other staff were teacher Martin Lerman, two student interns from Wheelock College four days a week, two Roxbury mothers on the fifth day, plus a teacher's aide from Roxbury who rode in and out with the eight children every day. Transport was by taxi to Weston in the morning, and a Weston parent drove the return trip.

During that first year, 1966-67, Weston Public School administrators visited the preschool frequently. Unlike the School Committee, who had to be conscious of the political climate in Weston, many school administrators favored bringing METCO to Weston, and they were pleased with the preschool.

Roxbury-Weston supporters were out in full force to testify at the School Committee meeting that voted to enroll nine METCO children in the Weston kindergarten for fall





*Roxbury Weston Preschool students play tennis and visit a farm in 1991.
(Courtesy Mary Marder)*

1967. The School Committee requested that the Roxbury Weston Preschool graduates be included among the nine. From these first nine children, . . . [Boston] participation ultimately grew to encompass 10% of the Weston public school population [now 8%]. The preschool, one of many such experiments to arise during the height of the Civil Rights Movement, is one of the few to survive to the present day.

In the fall of 1968, enabled to raise its enrollment of Roxbury children because they could now be transported on the METCO school bus, the preschool moved to larger quarters in the newly built Sunday School wing of the First Parish Church in Weston, where it continues to be housed.

METCO was not easily accepted in town back in the early days, and School Committee races continued to be fought over retaining METCO. A strong voice for integrated education came from the Weston churches, whose clergy for many years sent out an annual appeal letter for contributions to the Roxbury Weston Preschool and Summer Day Camp.



Program founders included (from left) Jay and Gay Fay, Kenneth and Imogene Fish, and Mary and John Sullivan. (Boston Sunday Globe, February 18, 1996)

Roxbury Weston Programs, Inc.

by Imogene Fish (2002)

Editor's note: In her 2002 history of Roxbury Weston Programs, Imogene Fish recalled that the idea for a program involving children from Weston and Boston grew out of deliberations of a sub-committee of the League of Women Voters dealing with educational issues. Nancy Baer, Harriet Elliston, and Fish were on this committee and dreamt up the idea for the camp described in Elliston's article on page 7. The following are quotations from her history.

Now a little bit about the historical context: Remember, this was 1965. What drove us to start this ambitious program? (As one of our founders recently reminisced:

“We had some nerve!”) It is important to remember that the founding of the programs occurred in the midst of a tumultuous decade of nation protest and action in the area of civil rights (and Vietnam of course). It was a time when many of us in Weston—our high schoolers included—were feeling alienated and powerless. We asked: “What were WE in Weston doing to combat racism—NOTHING!” The “sixties” was a time to “speak out and act up” and it was time for Weston to get involved.

Well, back to 1965—here we were, Weston families with young children, some with teenage children—feeling isolated and frustrated that we were not engaged in this battle against pervasive racism. Remember at that time, there were perhaps two black families living in Weston, and METCO was yet to be born. We were determined to get involved in a concrete way—we wanted to harness the wonderful energy of teenagers in this town and find a way for them, and our younger children, to have an opportunity to meet, play with, [and] work with children and teens from a different racial background. We hit upon the camp idea as a means of providing these opportunities to both groups—younger children as campers and the teens as counselors.

The Recreation Commission was hesitant at first about allowing the campers to use the swimming pool (back then a beloved but murky pond), but finally gave approval. Sadly, several Weston families stopped using the pool when the campers from the city appeared.

Thinking back once again on all this, I don’t know how we pulled it off! (“Fools rush in where angels fear to tread. . .”) First the camp and then the preschool, which is blessedly going strong after all these years under continuing strong leadership of dedicated individuals. Be reminded that during our early years we were called upon by several communities to consult with them about how to get similar programs started. None of them to our knowledge lasted more than a year or two.

Editor’s Note: I asked Imogene Fish two follow-up questions. Her answers are quoted below.

When did the camp program end?

I think the camp program ended in the late seventies, for a constellation of reasons, as I recall. It became increasingly difficult to recruit campers from the city. Fund raising was an issue. The preschool was in full swing, requiring annual financial support. There were more summer day camp options available for city children. Further, the Blue Hill Christian Center had a change in leadership. Rev. Virgil Wood, the contact we had through Rev. Harry Hoehler, was no longer there.

Can you provide more details about the Raspberry Festivals at the South Avenue home of Harriet and Bill Elliston?

Oh, the Ellistons —saints indeed. We did have “Raspberry Festivals” in July where, yes, people would pick their own — and we had lots of food, games for kids, and drinks —some kind of punch with raspberries, in a beautiful setting. Also “Peony Festivals” in June at the Ellistons. There would be buckets of dozens of lush peonies. I think people paid to come to the festival and then were given peonies to take home . . . something like that. These festivals were held for a number of years to raise money to support the camp and preschool. The endless fund raising! Annual Roxbury –Weston Dance with food (Happy to share our “Roxbury-Weston chicken” recipe with you — delicious but the ingredients would horrify you. Organic nothing), “Fancy Pants Dance” in Roxbury, auctions of services and such, you know, three hours of window washing (me), dinners of various types, vacation houses.

Weston METCO

by Pamela Fox

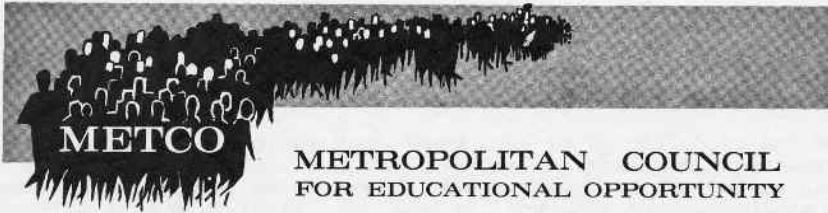
The METCO Program: Origins

The best-known school desegregation battles of the 1960s took place in the South, but schools in northern cities like Boston were also largely segregated. While Boston and Massachusetts had no laws mandating segregation, housing discrimination and banking policies resulted in de facto racial separation.

The black community organized to demand that the all-white Boston School Committee improve the quality of education for their children. In June 1963, black students and parents held the Boston School Stayout, a one-day boycott to protest the inequalities of all-black schools in poor urban neighborhoods. This event is considered by some to be the beginning of suburban involvement in Boston school problems. (5)

In February 1964, 20,000 black students staged a second one-day boycott. Some suburban white students attended the day-long “Freedom Schools” set up in black churches and community agencies to protest school conditions for black students. This event sparked the establishment of the Kiernan Commission by the State Board of Education to study the effects of racial segregation in schools.

In September 1964, a group of Boston parents began their own self-funded busing program called Operation Exodus, which involved busing children from Roxbury to the predominantly white, under-enrolled Peter Faneuil School in the Back Bay. Operation Exodus lasted only until 1969 but its voluntary nature and parent involvement helped lay the foundation for METCO.



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The Brookline Civil Rights Committee asked the Brookline School Committee to enroll black students from Boston, resulting in the establishment of a tutorial program. In April 1965, the Kiernan Commission issued a report concluding that racial imbalance is harmful to both black and white students. Forty-five Boston schools were found to be predominantly black. In August 1965, the Massachusetts State Legislature adopted Chapter 641 of the Acts of 1965: “An Act Providing for the Elimination of Racial Imbalance in the Public Schools.” This landmark legislation was the first of its kind in the nation. The Boston School Committee vowed to fight the law. (6)

In the fall of 1965, school committee members and superintendents from more than 12 suburban school districts met to explore a plan for suburban school systems to voluntarily enroll black students from Boston. Legislation was filed to provide a legal framework.

In December they met in Brookline to outline the basic program and choose a name for the organization: The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity, Inc. (METCO). For the first three years all transportation, tuition, and administrative costs were covered by the Carnegie Corporation and Title III funds from the U.S. Office of Education. METCO Inc, was set up in 1966 as the service provider, to handle day-to-day operations and admissions. According to one history,

Parents were advised that, “METCO is an interim program. We only expect it to last three years, as METCO only has funding for about three years. As soon as Boston ‘straightens out,’ the children will return to their Boston schools.” (7)

The “METCO Bill,” which allowed children to attend public schools outside their own city or town, was passed in August 1966. (8) Three weeks later, the first 220 Boston students, grades K-12, began their journey by bus to seven suburban districts: Braintree, Lincoln, Arlington, Brookline, Lexington, Newton, and Wellesley.

Weston Watches from the Sidelines

Weston school administrators were hesitant about joining this untested experiment and chose not to participate the first year. In a memo of May 25, 1966, to members of the Weston School Committee under the heading “The Negro Issue”, Superintendent Otty Norwood presented a list of questions beginning with “What will we try to accomplish?”

He suggested a few alternatives to bringing the Boston students to Weston: exchange students with Boston, bring in Boston teachers to try to improve their level of competency, exchange teachers with Boston, and/or revise school curriculum and make a concerted effort to affect Negro/white attitudes toward each other. If students were enrolled in Weston schools, he asked “how many?” and “in what grades?” Possibilities considered were kindergarten through 6th, 8th or 12th grade. What would be the tuition rate and funding sources? Under the heading “Some Educational Considerations,” Norwood listed selection criteria and assignment, teacher orientation and program development, parent orientation, transportation schedule, and evaluation plans that would measure attitudes, self-image, achievement, and aspiration in both black and white students.

One characteristic of METCO is its voluntary nature. Each community decides how many students to admit and what grade(s) they enter. Norwood’s memo suggests that the Weston School Committee was only beginning to consider whether it should join METCO, and if so, how its program would be structured.

Rev. Judy Hoehler’s history of Roxbury Weston Preschool (see page 11) emphasizes its importance in laying the groundwork for the Town of Weston joining METCO. The preschool began in the fall of 1966. During that first year, Weston public school administrators visited the preschool frequently and liked what they saw. The School Committee also had to be sure that federal funds would be available. The program was already busing 220 students to seven suburbs. An additional grant was needed if more suburban communities were to be included.

The testimony of Roxbury-Weston supporters helped convince the Weston School Committee to vote to enroll nine METCO children in the Weston kindergarten in the fall of 1967. METCO Inc. had enough additional funding to send a total of 128 more students to six new participating communities: Weston, Concord-Carlisle, Sharon, Walpole, Westwood, and Winchester.

1967: First Year in Weston

The School Committee limited its commitment to one year. A statement of November 7, 1966, noted that the program would not increase local taxes, since “by state



Beth and Tony Nolan became involved with METCO in 1987, when their youngest daughter Gwen was in first grade. This photo shows Gwen with Family Friend Miranda Craigwell at their graduation in 2000. (Courtesy Wendy Craigwell)

law, the full cost of tuition and busing must be covered by outside funds.” The statement added:

... in adopting the plan [the committee] sees no threat to its authority or responsibility from state or federal agencies. The committee is opposed to any program which would lead to the creation of a metropolitan school district and believes that Weston’s willingness to assist in a limited way in what is an acute problem in Boston at present will not weaken local town autonomy. (9)

To continue these children beyond kindergarten, the School Committee felt that the program must prove successful

in the opinion of teachers and parents directly involved, as well as school administrators and METCO officials. The committee stated that it would not consider expansion of the program beyond the original group of nine children until the program had been in operation in Weston long enough to be evaluated; and in addition, outside funds and school space would have to be available. (10)

The first year, Mrs. P.T. Gates was named to head a committee to recruit host families, so that Boston children would have a family within Weston to take care of them in an emergency. (11) Another goal was to provide opportunities to establish relationships and “build bridges” between the Boston and Weston communities.

The first annual report on the Weston METCO Program was probably written by Brook School Principal Ernest Hunter. All of the first nine Boston kindergarteners were assigned to Brook. The very positive report notes that all the students had adjusted to the program, socialized readily with Weston children, demonstrated enthusiasm for school activities, and generally enjoyed their experiences in kindergarten. Eight of the nine families wanted their children to continue. (12)

School Committee Votes to Continue

Favorable reports helped convince the Weston School Committee to continue the program. Weston was one of only two towns that chose to start students only in kindergarten, adding a new class each year. The program did not reach full size until the 1979-80 school year.

Don Pierson was hired beginning in the second year to assist Principal Ernest Hunter. Pierson was working on his doctorate in human development at Harvard Graduate School of Education. His responsibilities in Weston included supervising the education of the Boston kindergarten and first graders. The following year he was promoted to assistant principal and then principal at Brook School. He worked with teachers who had no experience in interracial settings. Boston students were placed with those teachers who were eager to participate, with two to three children per classroom so they would not feel isolated.

A history of Weston METCO from about 1979-80 describes the initial challenges as well as the positive outcomes that enriched the Weston classroom experience:

When METCO first began in Weston it was both exciting and a bit frightening. We had been working with children whom we thought had similar backgrounds and brought similar experiences to school. Suddenly we were faced with a group of children with very different experiences, children who had far more street savvy, somewhat different language patterns, and vastly different school experiences.

... As we began to approach our METCO kids with this awareness of their individual backgrounds and needs, it became apparent that this approach would also benefit Weston students. All children have gained from our interest and ability to look at each child as possessing very unique experiences. As educators this program has made our work much richer. For our children, an awareness and acceptance of differences among people has added an important dimension to their education. (13)

During the winter of 1968-69, a severe snowstorm meant that no transportation was available to return METCO students to Boston. After futile attempts by the school to contact METCO Inc. and the bus company, Mrs. Gates mobilized the host families in about an hour and all the METCO children were taken to their host family homes. They remained there for two nights and days. According to the May 1969 METCO annual report "By all reports this emergency turned out to be one of the highlights of the winter for both the Weston and Boston children." (14)

ABC's of METCO

BWMPO. The Boston Weston METCO Parents Organization (originally Weston METCO Parents Organization, WMPO) is headed by Boston parents and meets monthly. It was formed in response to the need for greater participation of Boston parents in the Weston schools as well as to disseminate information to Boston parents. The group also addresses bus scheduling issues and raises money for the late bus. The Steering Committee is composed of one representative from each grade level, the co-chairs, interested at-large members, and the METCO Coordinator.

CCC. The Community Coordinating Committee was established in 1970 to function as a supporting community arm of METCO, monitoring and strengthening the program while educating the community. The composition varied but generally included a representative from the Weston METCO Parents Organization, Weston parents, School Committee, Weston League of Women Voters, Weston METCO Scholarship Fund, PTO, Weston Community Children's Association (WCCA), Roxbury Weston Preschool, Weston Clergy Association, METCO liaisons, High School Assistant Principal, and Weston school principals. The name of this committee was later changed to Friends of Weston METCO (FWM).

FWM. Friends of Weston METCO. New name for CCC (see above).

Family Friends (originally called Host Families). Under this program, each Boston student is paired with a Weston student. This partnership provides Boston children with the security of having a Weston "home away from home" and offers families from both communities opportunities to share urban and suburban experiences. The **Family Friends Coordinator**, a part-time position, plays an essential role in forming and nurturing the Weston-Boston family bonds.

METCO Coordinators (sometimes referred to as Directors)

From 1967 to 1974. Weston METCO was under the supervision of school administrators Don Pierson (1968 – 72), Russell Tornrose (1972 – 73), and Charles "Tink" Gunnoe (1973 – 74).

- Donald Coverdale, 1974 – 76. Probably the first full-time Coordinator.
- Jacqueline Lindsey, 1976 – 79.
- Larry Hardison, 1979 – 81.
- Alta Starr, 1982 – 84.
- Roland Gibson, 1984 – 88, (Sabbatical leave 1988 – 89), 1989 – 90.
- Mary McCullough, Acting Coordinator 1988 – 89 and 1990 – 92. Coordinator 1992 – 2003.
- David Fuller, 2004 – 12.
- Lauren Collins, 2012 – 13.
- LaToya Rivers, 2013 to present.

The Early 1970s

For the first three years, students were transported from Boston by taxi. In the 1969-70 school year, for the first time, Weston provided transportation with its own buses and drivers. The METCO bus arrived and departed at the same time as the other buses. (15) Roxbury Weston Preschoolers were also able to ride the METCO bus.

The third annual report raised the issue of whether it would be legitimate for the Weston schools to request and assist in a more extensive screening process in an attempt to identify children who would benefit most. (16) In the years to come, METCO Inc. and Weston clashed at times over whether Weston could turn down students with learning issues or special needs that could not be met within the school district. METCO Inc. argued that Weston schools should treat each potential Boston enrollee as if his or her family had just moved to town.

For the first ten years, Boston children who attended nursery school in Weston received priority for placement into the kindergarten program. In 1976, Superintendent Philip Wood sent a memo to school officials and METCO staff, outlining a change in policy to “first-come, first served.” Preschools were asked to emphasize to parents that students at Weston preschools were not guaranteed a METCO placement in Weston, and that METCO Inc. would determine where students were placed, based on their position on the waiting list. (17) Roxbury Weston Preschool board and parents continued to advocate for more of their preschoolers to be admitted into the METCO kindergarten class, arguing that travel to Weston had already been established and child-child and parent-parent bonds formed.

In 1970, the School Committee formed the Community Coordinating Committee (CCC) as a central liaison to facilitate communication, bring concerns to school administrators, and make policy recommendations. In 1973, the CCC recommended that the School Committee reinforce and enlarge its commitment to the program. That year, Weston established a new standard for enrolling Boston students. Two Boston students were to be enrolled for each regular elementary classroom. This change resulted in the acceptance of 43 more Boston students in grades one through six, in addition to 14 kindergartners. (18)

Tenth Anniversary: Building Bridges

In 1977, the tenth annual report included this enthusiastic evaluation: “It is a time of pride and joy over the powerful and wonderful things that have happened as a result of the introduction of the program into our school system.” (19) That year there were 171 children in grades K to 9. Forty-four percent had siblings in the Weston METCO program. Weston had the fourth largest number of METCO students, after

Bob Freeman (right) taught art at Brook School from 1971 to 1973 and was Director of Art for Weston Schools from 1973 to 1981. The hiring of more minority teachers was a perennial recommendation in METCO reports. In 1978-79, Weston had only seven minority teachers out of 201.



Newton, Brookline, and Wellesley. The annual report noted: “a solid bridge has been built between our two communities, and it happened because of METCO.” (20)

The section entitled “A Look to the Future” discusses how, as the program progressed and students entered junior high, it was apparent that many were having “more than normal difficulties:”

. . . after ten years of METCO in Weston, it is a lot clearer that we need to pay more attention to the fact that black kids from the city may require special support to make it in a suburban school system. . . particularly in an affluent white community like Weston. Thus we need to acknowledge that METCO students bring to Weston a different cultural experience which may well affect their learning. (21)

In the spring of 1977, the Coordinating Committee recommended that a METCO Review Committee be established, resulting in an in-depth review of the program in the 1977-78 school year. Among the 37 recommendations was the need to increase minority hiring, a theme echoed in decades of reports.

At the start of the 1978-79 school year, Weston had a total of 2325 public school students, broken down by race as follows: 1 Native American, 178 Black, 51 Asian, 2 Hispanic, and 2093 White. Of the 201 teachers, 7 were minority, with 5 of those in the junior high and high school. (22)

“The Metco program is slowly being starved to death”

As noted earlier, METCO was funded for the first three years by the U.S. Department of Education and the Carnegie Corporation. Beginning in the fourth year, the Massachusetts Department of Education began picking up the tab. As costs increased, however, the level of state funding did not always increase proportionately.

In FY80, there were 201 Weston METCO students, 86 male and 115 female, along with nine full-time program staff, four part-time staff, and five bus monitors. The budget was \$422,190, considerably less than the original budget request of \$637,345. Superintendent Daniel Cheever wrote that the Weston School District was cutting expenses by eliminating one aide and one bus route and scrapping a proposed college tour for METCO seniors. He noted that Weston taxpayers were being asked to contribute more, with that amount rising from \$65,000 in FY79 to approximately \$100,000 in FY80. Cheever worried about the decrease in resources and increase in cost to the town:

The METCO program is slowly being starved to death while everyone stands around and wrings their hands. I am absolutely certain that while we bemoan the situation, angry suburban communities will force decisive action. Children—from Boston and suburban communities—will be harmed as a result. (23)

In another document, Cheever justifies the extra cost of METCO to the town, not only on the basis of reducing racial isolation and educating children about diversity, but also because it would be harder for Weston schools to maintain the same range and depth of academic and arts program with 200 fewer students. A further argument was that other school programs considered of benefit to students also cost money:

It is important to remember, however, that every program in the Weston Public Schools costs the Town. Athletic teams, special education programs, advanced placement classes, orchestras, art studios, English, history and foreign languages all represent an expense. Indeed, the per pupil cost of some of these programs—particularly those which serve a small number of students—is high. Advanced placement courses at the high school, some sports such as football and hockey are but a few examples. (24)

Alien

What does it feel like to alternate between two worlds? Weston METCO high school student Wanda Murphy wrote this essay, “Alien,” in November 1984. (24A)

Why do I feel I have no one who I can really talk to? Why is it so difficult to believe that there are people who are really able to understand me, who I can turn to in all situations? It is a hard thing to live in two worlds — to fly between two stratospheres. Is it possible to successfully share yourself, in equal manner, with two sets of friends. . . Is there such a thing as spreading oneself too thin in this endeavor? Is there pressure on the student to reach out and involve herself, in her fullest measure, in both worlds? Why do I feel I am fighting a long and drawn-out losing battle?

. . . [When] its time to go home, my daylight realm of existence fades to black until the revival of a new day. It's time for detachment. And as you leave the portholes of Never-Never Land, just think, it's only an hour and a half's ride through the twilight zone, just past the Land of Oz before you reach Dorothy and Toto's idyllic conception of home! And there you are — thrust back into "your" world, which you are so rudely removed from each day, and faced with the task of dealing with old faces attached to estranged personalities. Welcome "home," E.T.

. . . Your parents have no real conception of who you are, for all of your God-given energy is constantly spent five days a week in an institution twenty miles away (which to them is the same as a light year). How much of this friendly yet alien world can you accurately recreate for them when they themselves are ever so far from actually realizing what you experience day in and day out, having never been there themselves. . . .

The battle is between learning and taking the tools of knowledge from one world, and understanding as well as keeping the knowledge of culture and pride from the other. In the morning world the daylight inhabitants don't really understand all the things that may hold you back because of your foreign origin—because your culture is not native to their own. Backgrounds are different and it is hard to share and teach achievement, success, and high motivation. In the nocturnal world, you have so alienated yourself from your own, in a sense, because you have lost contact, communication, and general understanding of your . . . roots in trying to reach out on the other side. When you reach out and try to establish a more secure, common identity, to learn more about what you yourself are lacking from the other world, why is it that the conflicts come? The more you want to nestle into one nestling area, the more you have to let go of what little ground you've gained on the other.



Marcus Craigwell, Weston High School Class of 2004, (tenth from left), with fellow Senior Prom goers. (Courtesy Wendy Craigwell)

“Trouble on the Weston Front”

The 1980s was a time of challenges followed by a renewed commitment and strengthening of Weston METCO. The decade began on a high note with the Weston High School graduation, in the spring of 1980, of the first 11 METCO students: Darryl Baynes, Beverly Clark, Maria DaRosa, Keith Haynes, Christopher Hill, Karen Horner, Paul Locker, Brenda McMillan, Myric Thompson, Frederick Washington, and Mark Williams.

That first graduation ceremony went smoothly, but in 1982 or 1983, black students protested the tradition of boys wearing white tuxedos and girls wearing white dresses. The Boston seniors argued that the ceremony didn't appropriately reflect the academic significance of a high school graduation, and a few decided to wear caps and gowns instead.(25)

In May 1984, a serious incident shook the high school. Ten METCO students were charged by police with a series of thefts from gym lockers using a master key. An estimated \$450 in cash was taken, along with other items, over a two-month period. The students were charged with larceny. In Waltham District Court, they were put on probation and ordered to make restitution and do community service. The four ringleaders were not allowed to return to the school. (26)

METCO parents were angry that police had questioned their children without notifying them. The idea that Weston maintained a “double standard” for black students was voiced by some Boston parents. (27)

After the theft incident, the student council took the lead in affirming the school's support for METCO. The council sponsored a before-class breakfast in honor of METCO and decorated the cafeteria with signs proclaiming: METCO AND WESTON MAKE A GOOD TEAM. WE NEED EACH OTHER, and THE METCO PROGRAM HAS BEEN A SUCCESS SO FAR. WE WANT IT TO CONTINUE. (28)

Student council president Elise Billings is quoted as saying “Some people are using this to say, ‘See, we should never have had METCO studentsA lot of parents are against the program, and because of that their kids are against it.’” She added: “Both Weston and the Boston students benefit from the program. It shows us there are more types of people in the world than the people in Weston.” (29)

1984 – 1990: Roland Gibson, Meeting the Challenge

Dr. Thomas Whalen became Superintendent of Schools on July 1, 1984. Roland Gibson was appointed METCO Coordinator, replacing Alta Starr, who left to take

Weston METCO sophomores, 1980. Row 1. Lisa Wyche, Kurt Mack, Jamie Richardson. Row 2: Ellen Barbour, Alma Chislom, Andrea Hunter. Row 3: Shauna Evans, Stacey Rogers, Willie Saunders. Row 4: Albert Walker, Stephen Andrews, Carl Hyman. (1980 Weston High School Yearbook)



a fellowship in California. In a newspaper article several years later, reporter Ted Ross describes the situation in the fall of 1984:

When Gibson . . . took control, the METCO program had suffered two consecutive years of incidents which were devastating to morale. In addition, grades had plummeted to the point where the state had stepped in to ask questions. (30)

In an interview for this *Bulletin*, Gibson identified the challenges he faced in the fall of 1984:

- Very low Boston parent attendance at meetings.
- Very high Boston student detentions at the both the junior and senior high school.
- Low Boston student achievement, with few exceptions, at both the junior and senior high school.
- Waning Weston parent support. (31)

Roland Gibson was a fortuitous choice for troubled times. Gibson was one of

Weston's few minority teachers/administrators. He came to the district in 1973 as principal of Field School, one of two upper elementary schools at the time. In 1980 he transferred to the high school, where he taught social studies for four years. With his 13 years of experience in Weston, he had the skills and vision needed to rebuild the program. In the recent interview, Gibson recalled that time:

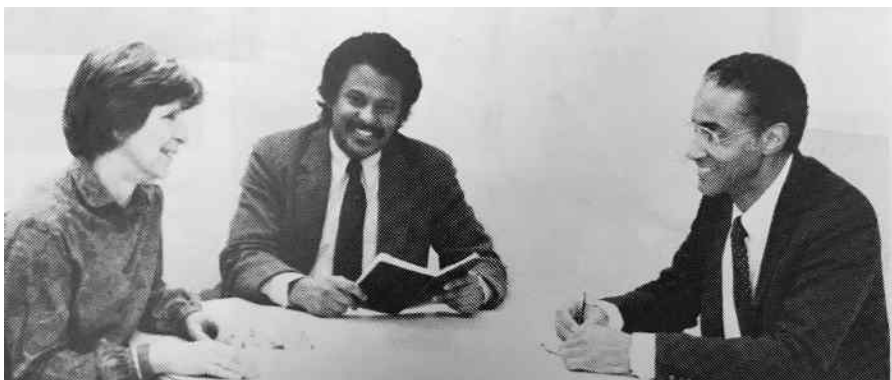
I had been prepared, consciously or unconsciously. There were Weston METCO students at Field. I knew some of the parents. I was ready to do more work on race relations as opposed to just the academic side. If we didn't fix issues of race, academics weren't going to mean anything to anybody. (32)

Gibson attributes the turnaround of the program to the Weston METCO staff: Mary McCullough at the elementary schools, Keith Baber at the junior high, and David Fuller at the high school. Collectively, they put together effective strategies to address both social and academic issues.

Gibson also credits Mary Pughe, the Community Coordinator, as “the glue that kept the Community Coordinating Committee and Weston METCO Parents Organization together” adding “I couldn't have done my work without her. She was my oracle, in a Socratic sense. She would let me know when I was going down a road that wouldn't be productive.” (33)

The Host Family program had atrophied. Gibson felt strongly that there had to be an active and viable support network for Boston students, who felt isolated and unconnected. The program was reinvigorated under the new name “Family Friends.” Mary Pughe coordinated “Stay Days” and “Go Days” for Boston and Weston children to spend the afternoons together in Weston or Boston. She planned grade level activities, community coffees, and “Dessert and Discussion” evenings.

At the beginning of his tenure, few Boston parents were attending meetings. The staff recommended that Gibson reconnect with Boston parents individually and personally. They asked interested Boston parents to invite 10 to 12 Weston METCO



Mary Pughe, David Fuller, and Roland Gibson (1986 Weston High School Yearbook)

families from each neighborhood to a designated home. Gibson and leaders from the Weston METCO Parent Association would attend these meetings, which took place in the fall of 1984 in Dorchester, Hyde Park, Roxbury, and Jamaica Plain, usually on weekends. Every Boston-resident parent was invited to one of these meetings; and the president of Weston METCO Parents Association, Aberdeen Allen, attended every one. Gibson notes: “My job was to listen.” (34)

Throughout the ensuing years, Gibson held meetings for both parents and students at Freedom House in Roxbury, at the Roxbury headquarters of METCO Inc, or in a function hall located in the back yard of Hamilton “Bud” Wyche in Dorchester. He recalled: “There was always food—that was important —and the meetings were well attended.” (35) In addition, the School Committee was holding one meeting a year in Boston. (36)

Gibson described his approach as “hands on,” adding: ”There was a standard that the Boston students had to meet. If there were issues, I would talk with the student and parents about how to address the matter.” Academic performance improved significantly. He also noted the importance of stable leadership:

Any organization that has new leadership every one or two years is in trouble, and that’s what was happening. From 1967 to 1984, a period of 17 years, there were (depending on how one counted) either five or seven different leaders. From 1984 to 2012, 28 years, there were only three leaders — myself, Mary McCullough, and David Fuller — so there was stability. We all had long tenures and similar interests in improving student achievement and race relations. (37)

The “Bridges” program began in 1984 at Weston Middle School. Initiated and led by Middle School English teacher Carol Ott with co-leader Mary McCullough, this voluntary group of 25 Boston and Weston eighth graders met weekly with three faculty advisors during what would otherwise be a free lunch period. They discussed multicultural issues and helped each other understand racial, religious, and socio-economic differences. The meetings continued into the 9th grade. In its third year, Bridges was cited by the Massachusetts Board of Education as an exemplary integrated education model. (38) In 1993, The Network, Inc., an organization in Andover, Massachusetts, selected the Bridges Program to receive a 1993 Multi-cultural Recognition Award because of its outstanding efforts in celebrating diversity. The award was presented in May of that year at a gala celebration at the J.F.K. Library in Boston. (39)

Ott recalls a day that middle school teachers were invited to have lunch at a METCO student’s home. They rode the bus to Boston along routes of METCO students to get a better understanding of their long daily commute. She also recalls attending Kwanza celebrations at METCO Inc. headquarters in Roxbury. (40)

Another initiative that started under Gibson’s tenure was the connection between

Weston Middle School and Timilty Middle School in Roxbury. Weston students were bused to Boston to participate in school activities at Timilty and Boston students were bused to Weston. Students shared writing, attended Spanish classes together, and performed plays for one another. (41) One of the criticisms of the METCO program had been “it’s all one-way.” With the middle school program, administrators were working to build a relationship with a Boston public school to demonstrate that this was not just a one-way program.

An example of this connection was an original play about Rosa Parks, written by Middle School drama teacher Laurie Katz in 1990 to coincide with Black History Month. Katz’s script was drawn from history and featured METCO students Dara Bourne and Byron Knight as Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King. After performing the play at Timilty, the cast and crew had lunch with Timilty School students. (42)

What made the years 1984 – 1990 and beyond, unique? Gibson summarized the turnaround this way:

All the ingredients were in place to create a more effective Weston METCO program: (a) a supportive Central Office and School Committee; (b) highly effective and supportive teachers and support staff; (c) engaged and supportive administrators; (d) a strong desire in Boston and Weston parent-partners to do better, working through the Community Coordinating Committee, Weston METCO Parents Association, and PTO; (e) Boston-resident students who were willing and able to put forth greater effort to achieve at a higher level; and (f) a solid, highly effective Weston METCO staff. (43)

At the time of the 25th Anniversary of Weston METCO in 1992, a newspaper reported: “there is widespread acknowledgement of Weston’s having one of the best METCO programs in the state.” (44)

Confronting Racism

In 1985, a reporter for the Bay State Banner asked Boston residents this question: “In your opinion, how welcome are blacks in Boston’s suburban communities?” The six opinions ranged from “Not that welcome” to “It depends on the people in the community.” Candelaria Silva of Dorchester, an academic liaison at Weston High School, responded “I would say that the restrictions are more economical ones and psychological ones now. The doors are not thrown open but neither are they bolted.” (45)

A performance that became known as the “blackface incident” at a 1985 Woodland School show brought the issue of racism to the fore. A group of fifth graders came on stage to lip synch Michael Jackson’s hit song “We are the World.” Some white children had put on black makeup to play the black performers in the video version of the song. Equally problematic was the fact that none of the school’s black fifth

Weston talks about racism

Residents disagree on whether it's a serious problem

By Michael de la Pena

NEWS CORRESPONDENT

Last week the Middlesex News interviewed dozens of people at random in Weston and asked them: "Do you think that there is a subtle racism in Weston?"

The question echoes the speech



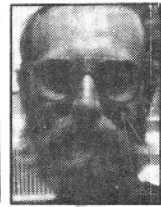
CHANDLER



GOLUB



SHEPARD



McKAY

year."

His speech got a lot of people around town talking. The News surveyed 69 people in Weston.

"That's the third black family (in town)."

Kim Chandler, 16, Dorchester, Weston High School Metco student:

Middlesex News article by Michael de la Pena, June 14, 1987.

graders were included. (46) Black students and parents were outraged. School Committee member Katty Chace was quoted in a later article as saying "There was a lot of tension." (47)

An outgrowth of this incident was a multi-year series of summer workshops for teachers and administrators, initiated by Gus Sayer, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, and organized by a faculty committee and Roland Gibson. Originally entitled "Racial Understanding/Multicultural Education" and later "Understanding Human Differences," the workshop was first held in the summer of 1986.(48) It featured speakers, videos, student panels, and round table discussions. The 17 participants in the first workshop were expected to write a report and make recommendations on how to better integrate racial and cultural understanding into the curriculum. (49) Weston parent leadership liked it so much that the PTO sponsored a similar program for parents.

At the 1987 Weston High School graduation, senior Nigel Jones gave a speech that brought the issue of racism again to the forefront. The 18-year-old Jones, a Weston resident, stunned students, parents, and faculty at the June 5 ceremony when he said he had been a victim of subtle racism in the predominately white suburb. Jones gave two examples, one where a police officer knocked at the door of his house. "He told my stepmother that he had had reports that there had been a black man in a beat-up car sitting in the driveway," Nigel said in his speech. "I was the black man in the driveway. The beat-up car is mine. The driveway is ours." In another example, he recalled arriving the first day to his advanced math class, where the teacher suggested that he was probably in the wrong classroom. Jones's address included this statement:

For many of you out there I am invisible. I am a statistic, or a barrier to

college admission, or a symbol of a good black boy. I am anything and everything but a human being, an individual with personal ambitions, emotions, and desires. (50)

In the days after the graduation speech, reporter Michael de la Pena at *Middlesex News* interviewed dozens of people in Weston at random and published his findings in a June 14, 1987 article entitled “Weston talks about racism: Residents disagree on whether it’s a serious problem.” Following are some of the responses:

66-year-old woman:

No, I think the town is fine—if you can afford to live here.

Judith Hoehler, minister:

I think it’s hard to make that generalization. I think there are people in town who are racist and others who are not. I read Nigel Jones’s speech and I thought it was very moving.

Bruce McDonald, WHS principal.

...yes. It’s everywhere. I’m interested in architecture so I notice different styles in buildings . . . but everyone in this culture notices skin color.

16-year-old METCO student:

Yes, on the whole. Being a METCO student I myself haven’t experienced anything to a degree that needed to be talked about. We’ve kind of grown up all together . . . but we still set ourselves apart so it’s not totally integrated, at least not yet. There’s no total acceptance between Weston and Boston students. I must say Weston has had a lot better experience than many other schools.

Joe Verovsek, WHS history teacher:

Well, there’s a subtle racism in our society as a whole and I think Weston reflects that. I don’t think Weston is any more racist than any other place. I think it’s important to make that distinction.

Bill McElwain, age 68:

I think that racism exists everywhere and in some places it’s less subtle than others. I think that subtle racism is in some ways more pernicious than overt racism because people aren’t showing their true feelings and are living a lie. I think racism is a factor in the human condition. (51)

After the teacher workshop “Understanding Human Difference” took place in late June, METCO Coordinator Roland Gibson noted in another newspaper article:

The workshop pre-dated Nigel’s speech. That is an indication of the school system’s commitment and the town’s commitment to understanding these issues and coming to grips with them. (52)



Mary McCullough with elementary students, c. 1980s. (Courtesy Mary McCullough)

Mary McCullough

Mary McCullough came to Weston in 1980 as Academic Liaison for the Middle School. She served as Acting METCO Coordinator in the early 1990s before being appointed Coordinator upon Roland Gibson's retirement. She continued as Middle School Academic Liaison and pursued the twin goals of academic achievement and social integration.

McCullough organized media coverage of the 25th Anniversary Rally on Beacon Hill and was active in keeping Weston METCO in the news. She worked with the Legislative Relations Committee of the METCO Directors in lobbying for METCO.

During her years in Weston, McCullough edited and expanded *Habari Gani*, the Weston METCO newsletter. The name means "What is the News" in Swahili; and the newsletter provided a way to communicate news, promote coming events, recognize student achievement at all levels, and help develop the cultural identity of Boston students. In 1993 she initiated the Efficacy Program, which teaches students that effort is the key to academic success. (53)

In the early 1990s, Helen Kaufmann took over from Mary Pughe as Weston METCO Community Liaison. Among the Family Friends events of 1992-93 was the Star Trek "Go" Evening, when over 240 Boston and Weston children and parents met at the Museum of Science to visit the special exhibition "Star Trek: Federation Science." More than 300 Boston and Weston Family Friends and METCO supporters attended the annual potluck supper at Roxbury Community College. Vee Brooks took over from Helen Kaufmann in 1994.

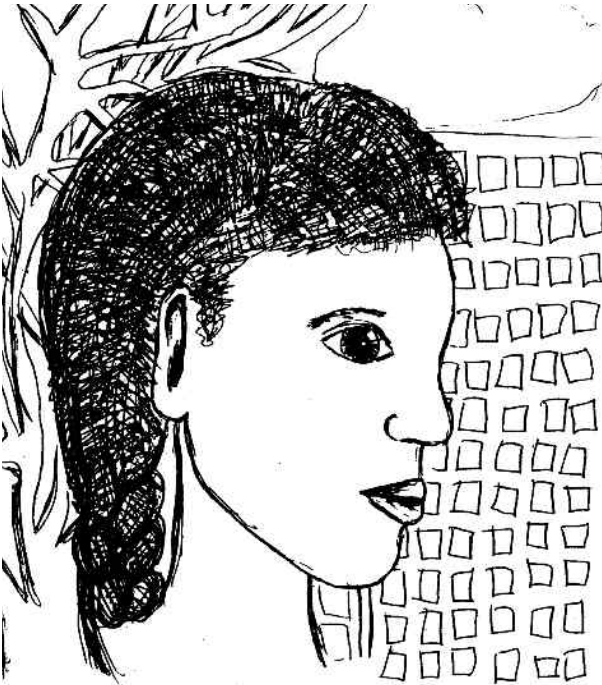
One of McCullough's initiatives was to have a program organized and presented

by students, black and white, every February for Black History Month. In a recent email, she recalled the challenges:

My first tries at this were a total failure. But I did not give up and eventually I got better at what I was trying to achieve. Sometimes there would be a reaction from some black students about the inclusion of white students in Black History programs. My goal, always, was to have students and adults understand all the complexities of our American story.

Family Friends and our monthly Boston-Weston dessert discussions were another way to bring people of different experiences and backgrounds together. It was a challenge, requiring us all to examine the lens through which we view our experiences. True integration is work, and it is not always pretty. Weston METCO was fortunate to have to so many Boston and Weston community folks working hard to make it a successful program. (54)

In 1992, in celebration of Black History Month, Woodland School METCO students under the direction of new elementary academic liaison Katani Sumner presented “Keep Your Eyes on the Prize: a Journey through Black History” to rave reviews. Funding was provided by the Weston Educational Enrichment Fund Committee (WEEFC).



Goin' to the Promise Land

In the mid-1990s, McCullough got a stipend to study the Great Migration at Harvard Graduate School of Education. For her follow-up project, she wrote the full-length play “Goin’ to the Promise Land” and received a WEEFC grant to stage it at Weston Middle School, with a cast of both black and white students. Community musicians com-

Program cover for the 1995 production of Goin’ to the Promise Land, an original play by Weston METCO Coordinator Mary McCullough with support from WEEFC.

posed the music and choreographers were hired to help with dance numbers. Working with Laurie Katz, Dawn Nelson, and members of the Weston community, they had three sold-out, standing-room-only performances. McCullough recalled:

The play was American history but some members of the community protested to the principal that they heard I was writing a “black play.” But there was more support for the play than not in the community. It was a great experience because it was a Weston community effort. (55)

McCullough and Sumner created incentives and awards for elementary students to recognize both effort and achievement. An after-school kindergarten program, held twice a week, reinforced skills learned in the classroom. High school “study buddies” met two days a week for one-to-one tutoring of younger students.

A letter from Karen Glass, a METCO parent, to Weston School Superintendent Meredith Jones in 1994 expressed the feelings of many who worked with McCullough: “. . . she is truly a woman of conviction and has a genuine love for her Boston charges. . . . She makes us better parents and true components of the Weston public school community.” (56)

After her retirement from Weston schools in 2003, Mary McCullough continued her work with The Streetfeet Women, a culturally diverse company of writers and performers founded in Boston in 1982 by McCullough and Elena Harap. McCullough’s plays have been produced in locations throughout Boston, and her short stories and poems have appeared in literary journals. Readings of her play, *A Fine and Dangerous Country*, were held recently under the auspices of TC Squared: New Theater Outside the Box.

The 1990s: Lobbying for Funds

State cutbacks and level funding continued in the 1980s and 1990s, along with increased program expenses. Fiscal losses meant chipping away at the edges of the program. One of the academic liaison positions was cut, with Mary McCullough doubling as METCO Coordinator and Middle School liaison. One option considered but rejected was the elimination of the METCO kindergarten program. The late bus run at 5:10 was eliminated from the budget but preserved with an enormous fund-raising effort by the Weston METCO Parent Organization with support from the Weston community. The late bus allows Boston students to participate in sports, drama, and other extracurricular activities.

In January 1990, Weston METCO Coordinator Roland Gibson took a group of Weston Middle School students to METCO Lobbying Day at the Statehouse on Beacon Hill to lobby for a proposed eight percent increase in funding requested

by the Department of Education. They joined a group of about 250 people from other schools and a large contingent of METCO parents. Testimony stressed that budget cuts resulting from two years of level funding had already resulted in reduction of staff and student services, and that another year of level funding would further reduce staffing, transportation, and other components vital to the program. (57)

Eighth grader Rachel Scheier-Dolberg, one of five students from participating districts chosen to speak to the legislators, described the value of the METCO program this way:

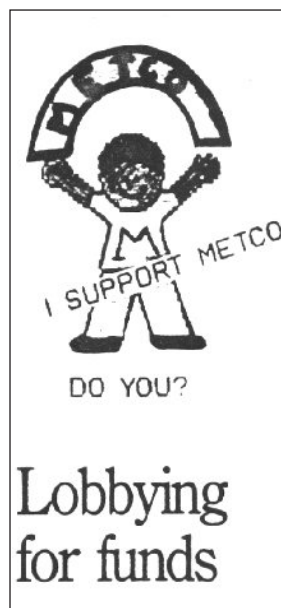
Being educated in a mixed classroom introduces us to the real world. . . . Often in social studies classes we discuss current events. Being able to hear the diversity of opinion among the Weston and Boston students about issues such as the recent Stuart case . . . makes me realize how many different effects the same event has on different people. (58)

[Editor's note: The Stuart case had exacerbated racial tension in Boston. On October 23, 1989 Carol DiMaiti Stuart was murdered in Mission Hill on her way home from a childbirth class. Her husband falsely alleged that his wife and unborn child were shot and killed by an African-American assailant. Stuart's brother later confessed to police that the crime was committed by Stuart to collect life insurance. Stuart committed suicide in early January 1990, just weeks before Schier-Dolberg's speech.]

David Fuller

David Fuller came to Weston in 1985 as the METCO Academic Liaison at the high school. He continued in this position after he took on the role of METCO Coordinator in 2004.

In a 2012 interview at the time of his retirement, Fuller recalled that when he first started, a lot of the Boston parents were on housing assistance or other aid to low-income families, and their kids were first-generation college candidates. Weston had to educate the families about what it meant to prepare their children for higher education. Later, a larger proportion of the students were "second generation," with a parent or older sibling who had gone through the program. "So the whole culture changed in terms of mindset and things just got better and better as time went on," Fuller observed.(59) As was true for his predecessors, Fuller focused on academic



achievement and leadership skills as well as creating a welcoming social environment. Fuller worked with the administrations of Dr. Alan Oliff and Dr. Cheryl Maloney in restructuring staffing, hiring more minority faculty, and developing academic support programs to serve both Boston and Weston students.

Fuller established several summer programs. For the elementary level, books were mailed to students for summer reading. Summer preview programs for incoming ninth graders were created for science, math, and honors world history. These efforts contributed to a narrowing of the achievement gap. On his retirement in 2012, Fuller noted that half of his high school students would be taking honors or AP classes the following year.

He worked tirelessly to push his METCO students to get involved in extracurricular programs and even drove them home when they were stranded for a ride. In 1992, Fuller established the Black Student Union, for which he served as advisor. The group sponsored an annual fund-raising dance and encouraged Boston students to participate in student government.

A highlight for METCO in 1991-92 was the initiation of the “Partners in Success” program. The goal was to match METCO students in grades 9 to 11 with adult black professionals who volunteered to become mentors and to spend at least one day per quarter with their assigned students. (60) The students submitted a written summation of the experience.

Fuller, a professional musician, established and directed a number of music groups during his 27 years in Weston including the Funky Bunch, a student music ensemble, and Gospel groups for students and faculty.

In 2006 he organized the first Gospel Jubilee, a popular fundraiser. In 2010, the evening included the Weston Faculty and Staff Gospel Chorale and the Weston High School Town Criers a cappella group, along with three out-of-town gospel groups. He organized music, dance, and theatre groups for Black History Month and a program on Afro-American influence on music, from early blues to the current rap explosion.



David Fuller in his role as METCO Academic Liaison, 1989 Weston High School Yearbook.



Weston METCO Coordinator David Fuller leads the Weston Faculty & Staff Gospel Chorale at the fourth annual Gospel Jubilee on January 30, 2010. (Photo by Claudia Krimsky in The Wayland-Weston Town Crier, February 11, 2010)

LaToya Rivers

In 2012, LaToya Rivers succeeded David Fuller as Weston METCO Director and High School METCO Liaison. Rivers grew up in Dorchester and attended the Needham METCO program from second grade through her graduation in 1993. She came to Weston in August 2014 after seven years as METCO Academic Advisor in Lincoln for grades 5 to 8.

As the Weston METCO administrator, Rivers designs and develops programs and serves as an advocate for all Boston students. As High School Liaison, she works directly with individual students, which, she writes, is “the most rewarding part of my job and what truly keeps me grounded and reminds me why I do what I do.” (61)

Rivers cites with pride some of the many achievements of last year’s Boston students:

- 3 National Honor Society members.
- 1 Posse Scholarship (a four-year, full-tuition national leadership scholarship).
- 8th grade class president was a METCO student.
- METCO students served on the Principal Advisory Council, School Council, and Student Council.
- METCO student was “Junior Youth of the Year 2017” from Yawkey Boys and Girls Club of Roxbury.

- 96% of Field School students participated in optional after-school activities made possible by the late bus.
- 92% of third graders were in the orchestra.

For five of the last six years, METCO has not been level-funded. Weston supplements state funding in order to maintain successful initiatives like SOAR (Summer Opportunity in Academics and Recreation) and the Family Friends Afterschool Program.

When asked about funding concerns, Rivers writes: “Funding always needs to be a consideration; my fear is when it is moved to the forefront of our discussions. Public school education in general is a resource that has a value that exceeds any dollar amount, but its cost often comes up and then dominates discussions.” She adds:

The question and focus needs to shift from what it costs to run this program to what will be the cost to our children—their future and our communities—if we don’t have it. One need look no farther than the state of the world today. There are events taking place in our society today that clearly demonstrate what a lack of tolerance and decency can do. (62)

When asked why Weston-METCO is considered among the best in the state, Rivers writes:

We have anecdotal evidence from generations of families that continue to request to be placed in Weston. Just last year, we graduated a pair of twins whose aunt was in the first graduating Weston-METCO class. Also, Weston receives many requests from other districts to learn about our model for parent organizations, summer programs, and community partnerships as well as our Family Friends program. (63)



Weston METCO students in the SOAR program (Summer Opportunities in Academics and Recreation) visit Land’s Sake Farm, Summer 2017. (Courtesy Land’s Sake Farm)

Weston-METCO Graduates

Weston-METCO graduates live all over the world and are engaged in a wide variety of professions including the following:

accountant	actor	architect
artist	author	bank loan advisor
business executive	buyer, fine jewelry	city official
city planner	entrepreneur	financial expert
film producer	health professional	insurance consultant
lawyer	manager	medical doctor
military officer	musician	news anchor
professional athlete	scientist	social worker
teacher	therapist	

Rather than including the accomplishments of some graduates at the risk of leaving out many others, the following pages highlight one family, the Craigwells and their seven Weston-METCO children, and one young woman, Kandice Sumner, who has devoted herself to teaching inner city Boston children who lack the educational advantages she had in Weston.

The Craigwell Family

Dorchester residents Mark and Wendy Craigwell hold the record for most years associated with Weston METCO. Four of their five children graduated from Weston High School: Miranda, Noah, and twins Marcus and Miles. Their daughter Bianca transferred to City on a Hill Charter High School after Middle School. In 2008, the Craigwells adopted two more children. Wendy recalls: “We didn’t have a second thought about doing Weston-METCO again. Although there were 20 years in between and there are some differences, it is still the same quality program, and we feel fortunate.” She describes some of their experiences below:

Our first introduction to the Weston program actually began with my younger sister Janine [West] Carter. Janine attended the Roxbury-Weston Preschool and entered the Weston METCO program in kindergarten, graduating in 1985.

So we knew the program early on, but not until we started having children of our own did we consider Weston METCO. My older sister, Gail Jones, enrolled her daughter Ashleigh Jones in METCO. She went through the Weston elementary screening process and was accepted. We realized this might be the way to a great education!

Thinking back, it was quite an anxious process, having to have your child tested at a kindergarten level, not sure what they were looking for or if your child was academically/socially prepared for this new school experience.

Fast forward...

Six out of the eight children (niece, nephew plus our four) graduated from the Weston METCO program. Weston gave our children a great opportunity for education and to experience social diversity at an early age. They all took full advantage of the academics/ sports offered (football, basketball, lacrosse, and track & field) and extracurricular activities. They formed many close friends and are still in touch (with the help of Facebook) with some of their high school friends.

The challenge was allowing our children to be involved in the Weston community after school hours and also keeping them invested in their own community. Keeping a balance was key.

We had so many memorable experiences when our children were participating in sports. We would gather family, friends, and our church community to come out to Weston sports events and cheer for the team. There was a great sense of community. In reflection, Weston public schools have been a positive and enlightening experience for our family. (64)



Craigwell family at Miles's graduation from Brown University in 2009. Back row (l-r) Marcus, Mark, Miles, Bianca, Wendy, Miranda, Noah. Front row: Hattie West (Wendy Craigwell's mother), Julia, and Xavier.

Miranda, WHS Class of 2000, Brown University Class of 2004. Rose Bruford College of Drama (UK), Class of 2007, M.A. with Distinction. David J. Zucconi Leadership Award recipient (2004), Independent Reviewers of New England Award (2014) for Best Supporting Actress in “Smart People.” Married, living in Boston.

Bianca, Country School and Weston Middle School, City on a Hill Charter High School Class of 2001, UMBC Class of 2006. Owner of Bwell Life & Style, living in Houston, TX.

Noah, WHS Class of 2002, DePaul University Class of 2008, Founder and CEO of beyond MEASURE productions, Roxbury International Film Festival Emerging Filmmaker Award (2012). Married with two children, living in Holbrook, MA.

Miles, WHS Class of 2004, Brown University Class of 2009, Track & Field and Football at Brown, Business Economics major. USA Rugby National Team Member, Insurance Consultant at Kibble & Prentice, living in Seattle, WA.

Marcus, WHS Class of 2004, Hobart College Class of 2009, Co-founder of Titletown Lacrosse Club, Business development manager at Tripleseat Software. Living in Boston, MA.

Julia, Class of 2021, Track & Field, Volleyball, Chorus.

Xavier, Class of 2023, Football. Chosen for METCO leadership conference.

Kandice Sumner

Kandice Sumner, Class of 2004, started Weston Public Schools in kindergarten. She is a second-generation METCO student; her mother, Katani Sumner, was in the Lexington METCO program and served as METCO academic liaison for Country and Woodland Schools in the early 1990s. In her senior year, Kandice was Weston’s first female African-American class president.

Sumner was the subject of the documentary film *Far from Home*, which followed her during her junior and senior years at Weston High School. The following quotations from her years at Weston High are taken from *Far from Home*:

I’m always aware of what I’m doing. Will this make me look a certain way? Will this look wrong? I kind of have to train myself to have a two-track mind, because if I just keep a one-track mind, everything else in my life will go astray.

We have to work twice as hard. It’s like I have two brains. Like one’s here



*Kandice Sumner (second from left) in the documentary *Far From Home*, which came out in 2005, distributed by Women Make Movies.*

[she points to the front of her head] and one's here [at the back of her head]. Right here [in front] is all the math and creative writing, A.P. U.S. History and Spanish Intermediate II, and all those classes and all that knowledge. But back here is "I'm black, and they're white." They're looking at me [thinking] "What are you going to do?"

It's very easy to fall through the cracks in Weston if you don't know how to play the game. Me, I don't know who taught me the game but I know how to play the game. I know the white culture. It really is a different language. They acknowledge me, they embrace me, because I know how to play the game.

Sumner earned a Masters in Education and is currently a Doctoral student in Urban Educational Policy. She teaches humanities—a combination of history and English—in the Boston public schools. She has created and facilitates a professional development curriculum entitled R.A.C.E. (race, achievement, culture, and equity) designed “to engage professionals of all ages on how to conduct courageous critical conversations concerning race, for the betterment of today’s youth.” (65)

Sumner talks about her Boston students (“my kids”) in an interview at TEDxBeaconStreet (2015), a TEDx talk “Survivor’s Remorse” (2016), and a TED talk “How America’s Public Schools Keep Kids in Poverty” (2016). All three are available on youtube. The documentary *Far from Home* is available at Weston Public Library.

Sumner’s 2016 TED talk deals with the question “Why should a good education be exclusive to rich kids?” It is described on the TED website as follows: “Schools in low-income neighborhoods across the US, specifically in communities of color, lack resources that are standard at wealthier schools — things like musical instruments, new books, healthy school lunches, and soccer fields — and this has a real impact on the potential of students.” Sumner sees this disparity every day in her classroom in Boston. In her inspiring talk, she asks her audience to face facts — and change them.



Family Friends (L-r) Olivia and Christian Henriquez and Kenny and Grace Feingold, taken just after they ran in Weston's mini-marathon in 2012. (Courtesy Loren Feingold)

Family Friends

In most cases, Weston students have just one Family Friend. Kenny and Grace Feingold and Christian and Olivia Henriquez are an example of Family Friend “twins.” The Feingolds became Family Friends when Kenny and Christian began kindergarten. Loren Feingold writes:

We spent a lot of time together as families, including the girls, who were in different preschools. It was such a natural fit with all of them from the beginning, so we just transitioned to the girls officially being Family Friends as well. It was very organic. They are now in 6th and 3rd grade so they have known each other for seven years. (66)

The Sands family was one of those featured in a 2007 article in *Wellesley-Weston Magazine*. At that time, Kristin and Trevor Sands were Family Friends with Marquis Caesar and Brenton Caesar-Allen. Their mother, Rachel Caesar, had been a METCO student in Weston, Class of 1989. When Rachel was called to active duty in Iraq with the National Guard in the early 2000s, Ken and Joan Sands took the boys every other weekend to provide support for Rachel’s mother, who was taking care of them. (67)

The Davies Family and Natalia Kennedy

In this interview, Tony and Alice Davies talk about their experiences with Family Friend Natalia Kennedy. Alice came from a Quaker family, headed by a grandmother who was an active integrationist, especially in the 1940s, when she integrated the National YWCA as its president and helped found and integrate the USO (United Service Organizations for support of U.S. troops).

We lived in Cambridge in 1974, when Judge Arthur Garrity ordered that Boston schools be desegregated by busing. We were horrified by the ensuing chaos. After living for two years in Alaska, we returned to the area in 1978, choosing Weston because of its reputation for excellent schools. Our daughter Kate became a Family Friend with Natalia Kennedy in 1986, when the girls were in the fourth grade.

We gained a daughter. Our family was so beautifully enlarged! We love “Nini” beyond words. She phones us on our birthdays, Mother’s Day, and Father’s Day, usually beating out our birth daughters. As a high school student, she would stride up to the Orthopedic Department at Harvard Vanguard’s Kenmore Center, where she was a patient and Tony a surgeon, and ask to speak with “Daddy.” The staff caught on pretty quickly.



Some Weston METCO Family Friends stay in touch well after high school. Below is a 2017 photo of a Davies family get-together. Top row: Tony Davies, Greg Smith, Natalia Kennedy (Class of 1996), Kate Davies Smith (Class of 1996). Bottom row: Aimee and Kent Smith, Luna (dog) and Alice Davies. (Courtesy Natalia Kennedy and Tony and Alice Davies)

We have a thousand stories. Natalia is a voracious reader and always had a book in tow, even as a 5th grader. Today, she and Tony frequently exchange books and debate their content, often dealing with race relations.

Natalia frequently stayed overnight at our house, especially when school activities ran beyond the late bus. Kate more occasionally visited her home in Boston. After our daughter Laura started college, her room became “Nini’s room,” and that’s where she still sleeps when visiting us. Natalia visits Kate and us at least yearly, bringing along her buoyant personality.

At Weston High School, Natalia was a force, an extremely popular “director” of the Class of 96’s social life, and a loyal friend. Kate still knows how lucky she was to have gained such a sister.

We remember Marcea, Nini’s mom, consulting us when Nini’s older sister wanted to go to Hampton University “in order to rediscover her black roots.” Her older brother also attended Hampton. However, when Natalia was deciding which college to attend, her older siblings advised her NOT to choose Hampton, feeling it too restrictive for her personality. Instead, she went to the University of Vermont, which at that time had a 3% minority student body, counting Asians. She thrived at UVM, playing women’s rugby, majoring in psychology (also Kate’s college major), and serving as a dorm proctor her senior year. Subsequently, she received a Master’s Degree in Social Work at Hunter College in New York City and established her own practice as a therapist in Brooklyn. (68)

How to Support Weston METCO

Weston METCO Scholarship Fund

In 1971, the oldest Weston METCO students were only in the fourth grade. But Weston parent Jane Funkhouser was thinking about the future. She drafted a letter to parents and host parents, urging that plans be made to help support Boston students in furthering their education beyond Weston High School. She invited contributions and established a savings account in a local bank. In January 1976, under the guidance of attorney H. Kenneth Fish, The Weston METCO Scholarship Fund, Inc, was formally established and incorporated as a non-profit charitable organization. The individuals elected as founding trustees were Frank B. Dow, Jr., H. Kenneth Fish (Clerk), Donald E. Pierson, Alton Thomas, Harry B. Thompson, Jr., Sally Z. Weiss (president), and Hamilton Wyche.



Dr. Cheryl Maloney with Ivy Grant (left) and Ivy's mother, Sherice, August 2016. From 1985 to 2015, as a teacher, History Department Chair, WHS vice-principal, assistant superintendent, and school superintendent, Dr. Maloney was a strong supporter of METCO and worked to build community and keep programs funded. (Courtesy Cheryl Maloney)

The mission of the fund is to help put the cost of a college education within reach of graduates of Weston METCO. Scholarships are need-based and aim to reduce the gap between the cost of college and other aid available to the student.

The first scholarship awards were distributed in 1980 when the first group of METCO students graduated from Weston High School. In the ensuing 36 years, the fund has awarded more than one million dollars in scholarships to more than 200 Weston METCO graduates. Eight of the graduates currently serve as trustees of the scholarship fund. The main source of fund raising is an annual letter.(69)

Trustees: Chandra Mohammed '92, President; Donald Pierson, Vice President; Angela Molyneaux, Secretary; Sharon Keyes, Correspondence Secretary; Will Wrean '82, Treasurer. Keith Abbott '87, Cheryl Antoine, Jaquetta Oliver Bigby '95, Lynn Song Brown, Sheila Burkus, Gloria Castro, Tina Chartrand '77, Erika Christon '06, Michelle Crawford-Cranmore, Pamela R. Foster '78, Elizabeth Hochberger, Leila Hooper, Barbara Karchmer, Byron Knight '95 JD, Roslyn Marshall, Monique Marshall-Veale '86, Elizabeth Nagarajah, Abby Psyhogeos, Mary Pughe, Denise Simmons, Kimberlee Wyche '83 MD, MPH, Lisa Wyche '82. **Honorary Trustees:** Wallace Ackley, Aberdeen Allen, Robert Danforth, Robert Freeman, William H. Wrean.

Make checks payable to Weston METCO Scholarship Fund and mail to William H. Wrean Jr, 49 Bay State Road, Weston MA 02493.

Friends of Weston METCO

FWM is a group of Weston parents, teachers, and community members committed to supporting and advocating for the METCO program. Every spring, Friends of Weston METCO send out an appeal letter to the Weston community to raise funds for the different aspects of the METCO Program including the SOAR program (a summer enrichment program for Boston elementary students) and summer classes in AP History, Geometry, and Physics for high school students to help them get a jump start on the academic year. Money raised also helps fund the Family Friends Program, a program which pairs Boston students with a Weston family in case of an emergency and also provides a connection in an unfamiliar community. This program is a unique link in the Weston METCO experience and a big reason why our METCO program is so successful. Last year FWM raised \$10,606 to help cover costs of these initiatives.

FWM Committee: Cheryl Antoine, Pam Bator, Jennifer Betty, Cristy Brackett, Sheila Burkus, Theresa Burns, Michelle Crawford-Cranmore, Theresa Dryden, David Fuller, Roland Gibson, Madeleine Kenyon (Chair), Kelly Kirmelewicz, Paul Lualdi, Elizabeth Nagarajah, J.R. Ortiz, LaToya Rivers (Weston METCO Coordinator).

If you have questions or would like to get involved in Friends of Weston METCO, please contact Madeleine Kenyon at madelaine.kenyon@comcast.net or call 781-891-0665. To donate, make checks payable to Weston Public Schools with a notation "Weston METCO Gift Fund" and mail to Weston METCO Office, Weston High School, 444 Wellesley Street, Weston MA 02493.

Thank You!



Photo of the METCO Class of 2016 included with the Weston METCO Scholarship Fund Mailing. (Back row l-r) Maurice Blake Jr., Kendall Raye, Olubiyi Ojo, Collins Ebozue, James Joutras,, Jevryl Jordan Benjamin. (Front row l-r) Yodit Habtemariam, Kiara Powell, Zahrea Gay, Kamina Nixon-Townsend, and Shyan Brown.

Please let Weston's community leaders know that you support Weston METCO!

Celebrating 50 Years

To celebrate the 50th anniversary, Weston METCO is planning a year-long series of special events. On November 9, the Weston Historical Society program "A History of METCO in Weston: 50 Years" will feature a panel discussion with Imogene Fish, Roland Gibson, David Fuller, and Don Pierson at Weston Public Library Community Room, 7:30 pm. The historical society is also planning a small traveling exhibit on the history of Weston METCO. The Weston Media Center is working on a video history that will premiere at the high school. Also in the works are a speaker on diversity, special Black History Month assembly, Gospel Jubilee, Potluck Supper, and Fundraising Gala. Watch for details at <https://www.westonschools.org/metco/>.

Acknowledgements

Many members of the Weston METCO community and Weston residents contributed to this issue. Special thanks to the following people for sharing their memories, photographs, and memorabilia,



Imogene Fish (left) and Madeleine Kenyon.

for answering my emails, and for reading many rough drafts: Roland Gibson, Mary McCullough, David Fuller, LaToya Rivers, Don Pierson, Imogene Fish, Dr. Cheryl Maloney, Carol Ott, Bob Freeman, Wendy Craigwell, Madeleine Kenyon, Mary Marder, Tony and Alice Davies, Loren Feingold, Madeleine Mullin, and the Weston Public Library staff. Special thanks also to Ilene Horowitz for helping me transition to the InDesign software used to produce this issue of the Bulletin.

Pamela W. Fox, Editor

Endnotes

Editor's Note: Most of the documents cited below can be found in the Weston METCO administrative files. The future location of these files is to be determined. (1) <http://roxwes.org/about-roxbury-weston-preschool/our-history/>. (2) Roxbury Weston Preschool brochure, undated. (3) *The Other Boston Busing Story: What's Won and Lost Across the Boundary Line*, by Susan E. Eaton, 2001, p.3. (4) <http://www.npr.org/sections/ed/2015/06/30/418599078/frozen-in-time-remembering-the-students-who-changed-a-teachers-life>. (5) "A Brief History of METCO," *The TAB*, 9-12-1995. (6) *A History of METCO: The Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity: A Suburban Educator for Boston's Urban Students* by Ruth M. Batson and Robert C. Hayden, Special Preview Copy, Select Publications, 1987, p. vi. (7) *Ibid*, p.3. (8) Chapter 506, "An Act Providing for the Attendance of Certain Children in Public Schools of Cities or Towns Other Than the Cities or Towns in Which they Reside." (9) Statement by the Weston School Committee, 11-7-1966. (10) Press release from Weston Public Schools, 6-5-1967. (11) *Ibid*. (12) "METCO Program," March 7, 1968, unsigned report. (13) "THE HISTORY OF METCO," 9-page typescript, c. 1979-80, undated, unknown author. (14) [Second Annual] "METCO Report," May 1969, by Ernest Hunter, Principal of Brook School. (15) Third Annual METCO Report, by Donald Pierson, 4-23-1970. (16) *Ibid*. (17) Memo of 8-5-1976 from Philip Wood to Weston school officials and METCO staff. (18) THE HISTORY OF METCO," *op.cit*. (19) 1976-77 Annual Report by METCO Community Coordinating Committee and METCO Coordinator's office, 6-6-1977. (20) *Ibid*. (21) *Ibid*. (22) Dan Cheever, Superintendent of Schools, to Weston School Committee, re FY80 METCO Budget, 3-29-1979. (23) *Ibid*. (24) "THE HISTORY OF METCO" section entitled "School Issues, the superintendent's view of METCO," *op cit*. (24A) *Town Crier* 8-27-1987, part of a special supplement for Sudbury, Wayland, and Weston entitled "METCO: where it's been, where it's going." (25) "Trouble on the Weston Front: Larceny, 10 METCO kids, and many hard feelings," by Peter Canellos, 6-26-1984. (26) "Learning from the METCO/theft controversy," *Wayland/Weston Town Crier*, Weston Edition, 7-5-1984. (27 to 30) *Ibid*. (31) Pam Fox, Interview with Roland Gibson, 7-24-17. (32 - 35) *Ibid*. (36) In 1999, for the first time in the program's history, the School Committee voted to authorize a representative of METCO parents to advise it and participate in SC discussions in a non-voting capacity. 1999 *Town Report*, p. 114. (37) Roland Gibson, *op cit*. (38) "METCO – 20 Years" School Issues, Weston Public Schools, February 1987. (39) 1993 *Town Report* p. 92. (40) Telephone interview with Carol Ott. (41) 1990 *Town Report*, p. 91. (42) "In History Play, the Lesson is Unity: Civil Rights Drama, Jointly Produced, Nurtures Bond between Schools," by Don Aucoin, *Boston Globe*, 3-1-1990. (43) Roland Gibson, *op cit*. (44) "Weston METCO celebrates 25 years in town" by Beryl Jupiter, *Wayland-Weston Town Crier*, 3-26-1992. (45) "Roving Camera" by Janice Rogovin, *Bay State Banner*, 5-2-1985. (46) "Weston and the World, *Boston Globe*, 5-19-1985. (47) "On the Rebound," by Ted Ross, *The Tab*, 2-10-1987. (48) "Racial Understanding/ Multicultural Education, 1986 Summer Workshop Report, July 1986. (49) "Racism seminar given in Weston" by Bill Walsh, *Middlesex News*, 6- 30-1987. (50) "Weston teachers say racism is a concern, not a crisis," by E. Golden McGarrahan, *Middlesex News*, 4-4-1987. (51) "Weston talks about racism: Residents disagree on whether it's a serious problem," by Michael de la Pena, *Middlesex News*, 6-14-1987. (52) McGarrahan, *op.cit*. (53) 1994 *Town Report*, p. 101. (54) Email from Mary McCullough to Pam Fox 9-3-17. (55) *Ibid*. (56) Weston METCO files, 1995. (57) "A visit to the State House," by Kay Cottle, *Wayland-Weston Town Crier* 1-25-1990. (58) "Student gives speech on need for METCO," *Wayland-Weston Town Crier*, 1-25-1990. (59) "Longtime METCO director stepping down," by Susan Wagner, *Weston Town Crier* June 28, 2012. (60) 1991 *Town Report*, p. 90. (61 - 63) Email, LaToya Rivers to Pam Fox, 7-20-2017. (64) Email, Wendy Craigwell to Pam Fox, 8-11-2017. (65) https://www.ted.com/speakers/kandace_sumner. (66) Email, Loren Feingold to Pam Fox, 9-13-1. (67) *Wellesley-Weston Magazine*, Spring 2007. (68) Email, Alice Davies to Pam Fox, July 2017. (69) Typescript drafted by Don Pierson, 3/3/17.

With Grateful Thanks

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George and Nancy Bates with their children Stephen, Sarah, and Cindy. Photo taken at the Biddle house, 100 Orchard Avenue, at Christmas 1967. (Courtesy Nancy Biddle Bates)

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