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ABSTRACT

The first year of this study addressed such questions as: What effects will the increasing black population have both immediately and developmentally on the suburban school? What has been the response of the suburban school system to the black student? What changes in the educational policy, curriculum, administration and structure are taking place? With what effect? What financial changes are needed for adequate educational support? What has been the changing relationships among the schools and various governmental agencies; county, state and Federal? Can those suburbs with black populations show surrounding suburbs--and the central city--that quality education can continue under the stress of a changing population? Can these suburbs demonstrate new ways of coping with problems on which the city schools have foundered? Can they develop new methods and ideas for educating the young that can be shared widely among educational institutions in the country? The initial aim was to look at several suburban school districts experiencing increases in black population in the New York Metropolitan Area. During the first year, we looked at two communities, the school districts of Roosevelt and Westbury. Both are located in suburban Nassau County, part of the expanding New York metropolis. Open-ended interviews were conducted with people from the community and people from the school system (blacks as well as whites), people who had lived there for a long time, and blacks who had only recently moved in. Special care was taken to include low-income blacks. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours. (Author/JM)

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**THE BLACK SUBURBANITE
AND HIS SCHOOLS**

**An interim report on a study of the impact of
black suburbanization on the school system.**

Helen Randolph, Claire Collier, and Morton Inger

October 1970

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EDUCATION & WELFARE
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THE BLACK SUBURBANITE AND HIS SCHOOLS

INTRODUCTION

Contrary to the prevailing impression that the suburbanization of America is a white phenomenon, evidence is mounting that blacks are moving to the suburbs at a greater rate than whites. Analyses of census taken before 1960 demonstrated that Negroes were largely concentrated in urban centers and that only a trickle were joining the nationwide move to the suburbs. Recent studies have shown, however, that the movement of blacks to the suburbs has increased sharply in the last ten years.¹ Based on preliminary census reports, an average of 85,000 black parents and children have made the move to the suburbs each year since 1964. The rate of the black exodus from city to suburb is also accelerating. Between 1964 and 1969, 600,000 blacks left the central cities for other places in the metropolitan areas, compared with 200,000 in the previous four years. This represents the most rapidly growing population movement in the country.² While demographers have projected through 1985 that central cities will continue to gain nonwhites, their projections indicate also a continued significant increase in nonwhites in the suburbs.³

Older, densely settled suburbs, often near employment centers, have attracted many Negroes. In a study of Negro migration to the suburbs and their residential patterns, Taeuber and Taeuber found that the first Negroes to move into these kinds of white neighborhoods are financially able to purchase better housing than what was available to them in urban areas.⁴ There is evidence that blacks pay more for less sound housing than whites of comparable income.⁵

These more affluent Negroes are followed in the suburban exodus by low-income blacks who move into dilapidated houses of low values in areas with inadequate public services.⁶ In these areas, some public housing has been erected, whites have moved out, and jobs for the under-trained have become increasingly available.⁷

A third type of suburban area with significant black population is the new suburban development. Some developments, such as Richmond Heights in Miami, have been built exclusively for Negroes. In other new suburban developments, small numbers of blacks are moving in. The suburbs of Hartford, Connecticut, and of New York's Suffolk County include developments of this type, for example. Developments in many suburban areas, however, remain exclusively white.

The suburbs that have experienced increasing black populations often represent isolated islands within a white suburban sea.⁸ It is this type of suburb we have chosen to study.

According to preliminary census tabulations, the suburbs, containing more than 71 million Americans, now represent the largest sector of the country's population.⁹ In New York State in particular, the results of the new census data will shift political power from cities to suburbs. Suburbanites may be as hostile to cities as the cities' long time foes, the farmers and small town residents, have been. With cities becoming increasingly black and poor, as seems to be the case, the polarization of Americans by race and socioeconomic status, coupled with the decrease in urban political power, threatens to exacerbate the urgent problems of our minority populations. What happens in the suburbs of America in their dealings with racial minorities will have important consequences for the cities as well.

Farley¹⁰ suggests that the expansion of the black suburban population will depend on many factors, including: the rate at which the economic status of blacks improves; the rate at which new low and moderately priced houses are constructed, which in turn depends on housing policies fostered by the Federal government and by changes in local zoning and building codes;¹¹ how soon Federal open occupancy laws become fully effective, thus increasing the availability to blacks of existing suburban housing.¹² Open housing laws do little to help the low-income black, however, if no low-cost housing is available for black or white as seems to be the case in many suburbs.

To Farley's list of factors affecting the expansion of the black suburban population should be added the results of the educational experiments now taking place in racially changing suburbs. Farley has documented the fact that the greatest increase in the black suburban migration has been in the 20-34 age bracket with children in the 0-4 bracket.¹³ This group has moved to the suburbs from urban areas and has a higher educational and economic attainment than the average for Negroes. It is these families who will help to populate suburban schools in the next two decades.

The school system in the suburb represents the focal point of shared community interest and concern. It is the institution that most directly effects the lives of the greatest number of residents through its need for tax revenue and its effect on property values, as well as its physical and psychological presence in the lives of the suburb's children and their parents.

What effects will this increasing black population have both immediately and developmentally on the suburban school? What has been the

response of the suburban school system to the black student? What changes in the educational policy, curriculum, administration and structure are taking place? With what effect? What financial changes are needed for adequate educational support? What has been the changing relationships among the schools and various governmental agencies, county, state and federal? Can those suburbs with black populations show surrounding suburbs -- and the central city -- that quality education can continue under the stress of a changing population? Can these suburbs demonstrate new ways of coping with problems on which the city schools have floundered? Can they develop new methods and ideas for educating the young that can be shared widely among educational institutions in the country? Our first year's study will begin to offer some tentative answers to these questions.

In this day of increasing demand for community control over the services in one's living area, investigating suburbs, which exemplify community control in the minds of most city dwellers, can help to show where community involvement and control have a positive effect and where their effectiveness is hindered by laws, structures, professional standards, and government policies.

In many respects, how these suburbs respond to their changing situation will in part determine the residential patterns and the educational policies of both suburb and city.

Movement of Blacks in the New York Metropolitan Area

Our initial aim was to look at several suburban school districts experiencing increases in black population in the New York Metropolitan Area. During the first year, we looked at two communities, the school

districts of Roosevelt and Westbury. Both are located in suburban Nassau County, part of the expanding New York metropolis. A brief look at the New York Metropolitan Region will provide some indication of the black movement in this area.

For our purpose of looking at the nonwhite population in suburban counties around New York City, we have selected those four counties in New York State closest to New York City: Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk, and Rockland. First we shall look briefly at the numerical increases and general characteristics of the black population in these four counties and second, we shall examine more specifically Nassau County which contains the two communities selected for study.

The increase in the nonwhite population in these four counties between 1960 and 1965 is presented in the following table:¹⁴

	<u>Total Population</u>	<u>Non-white Population</u>	<u>Percent of Total</u>	<u>Increased Since 1960</u>	<u>% of Increase</u>
Westchester	853,198	74,598	8.7	12,113	19.0
Nassau	1,397,721	55,390	4.0	13,258	31.5
Suffolk (1968)	1,014,846	46,623	5.0	19,503	71.9
Rockland	192,724	10,393	5.4	3,241	45.0

One of the most significant factors about the increase in the black population in these suburbs during this time period was the emergence of segregated residential patterns common in urban areas. In most instances, there was a heavy concentration of nonwhites in a few communities within each county. This pattern has continued into the present decade.

In the 44 communities of Westchester, 11 communities together accounted for 89 percent of the county's total nonwhite population.

Three communities, each with more than 10,000 nonwhites, accounted for 55 percent of all nonwhites in the county. These are Mount Vernon, Yonkers, and New Rochelle.

In Nassau, the county in which our two communities are located, the nonwhite population was even more concentrated. Of the 93 communities, 12 contained 75 percent of the entire nonwhite population. Hempstead Village had the largest number, 11,904 (21.5 percent) and New Cassel had the highest proportion, 4,923 (53.1 percent).* Suffolk County, which is the largest geographically and the most rural of the four suburban counties, contains the town of Babylon which accounts for more than half of the nonwhite population in the county. The nonwhite residents in Rockland County were more dispersed than in the other counties under consideration. However, three of the 31 census tracts accounted for 56 percent of the total nonwhite population.

There were more nonwhite females than males living in the suburbs, comprising from 51-65 percent of the population. Before 1960 the proportion of females to males was significantly higher. This can be accounted for in some degree by the number of "live in" domestic employees in counties such as Nassau and Westchester. Between 1960 and 1965, however, more males than females migrated to the suburbs in Nassau County. This may be accounted for by two factors: 1) more families moving into the area; and 2) Negro domestics playing less of a role in Nassau's nonwhite population.

The nonwhite suburban resident tended to be younger than the white resident. Approximately 41 percent of nonwhites were under 20 years of age while 19-22 percent were over 45.

*Both of these figures are based on 1965 information and have increased significantly in the last five years. New Cassel is now about 75 percent black.

In Nassau County the nonwhite population grew at a faster rate than the white population -- the nonwhite increase was 31.5 percent during 1960-65 while whites increased 6.7 percent. Of the 93 communities in Nassau, 50 showed nonwhite increases. Five communities experienced non-white population increases of 1,000 people or more and together accounted for 12,158 new nonwhite residents, almost the entire county increase of 13,258 during 1960-65. These communities are Hempstead, New Cassel, Roosevelt, Freeport, and West Hempstead-Lakeview.* These same communities experienced large decreases in the white population. In many instances, movement by the white population has been from community to community within the county.

Public school enrollment reflected the growing number of minority residents in Nassau County, but was still far below the metropolitan area's minority population rate of 18 percent. The number of professional staff members in the public schools from minority groups failed to keep pace with student increases.

In the school year of 1967-68 in Nassau the total number of Negro and Puerto Rican students and of professional staff in public schools was the following:¹⁵

<u>Student Enrollment</u>			<u>Professional Staff</u>		
<u>Total</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>P.R.</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Negro</u>	<u>P.R.</u>
332,423	16,332	1,316	19,855	351	19

*New Cassel is part of the Westbury School District, one of the two communities studied. Roosevelt is the other community included in the study.

Objectives and Research Procedures

The objective of the Black Suburbanite Study is to determine the impact of suburbanization of blacks on the school system. We have attempted to answer the following questions about the schools in Roosevelt and Westbury: What has been the response of the school system to the black student? What administrative and structural changes have been made in the curriculum? What financial changes have been necessary? What has been the changing relationship between various governmental bodies and agencies, local, county, state, and federal? What has been the community response to change?

In order to accomplish our objective, it has been necessary to look at the following interrelated dimensions:

1) The black resident and his personal characteristics, hopes, and fears. Why did he move to the suburbs? Is he employed in the community or is he a commuter? How does he feel about the community and its schools and how active is he in its affairs?

2) The community itself. What are the housing patterns? What are the socioeconomic class relationships? Is the population stable or unstable? What are the employment opportunities within the community and surrounding areas? What are the real estate practices? What have been the changes in business conditions?

3) The governmental context. What have been the effects of anti-discrimination and open housing laws? What provisions are there for the funding of federal programs? What are the welfare policies? What are the real estate tax laws and what is their relevance to the support of local education?

For the first year, we conducted open-ended interviews in two suburbs in the New York metropolitan area. One community has a majority of black residents, and the blacks are predominantly middle class but with a sizable minority (about 30 percent) on welfare. The second community has a minority of blacks, and the blacks are predominantly middle and upper-middle class. The respondents included people from the community and people from the school system (blacks as well as whites), people who lived there a long time, and blacks who had only recently moved in. Special care was taken to include low-income blacks. The interviews ranged from 30 minutes to two hours.

An exploratory approach to the subject was used in order to permit new conceptions and perceptions to develop which might form the basis for an experimental design to be developed upon completion of the initial year's study. Eli Ginzberg has used a similar exploratory approach in his study of the young middle-class Negro male in the white man's world.¹⁶ Although there are many clues to what has been developing in the suburbs, we have deliberately used an open-ended approach that would let as few characteristics of population, community, and school slip through the research sieve as possible. We did not feel justified, on the basis of what was primarily demographic research, in creating a research design that would attempt to measure correlations among variables assumed to be most important and relevant. We felt it was necessary to remain flexible in our data gathering to uncover the many facets of black suburban reality. We hoped to develop new insights and perceptions of the black suburbanite, the suburbs he calls home, and the schools his children attend. We plan to use these insights and perceptions to design a broad-scale study which might be used to compare the black suburbanite

and his schools with their urban counterparts or with the people and schools of white suburban communities. Only then can we discover what his presence means to suburban population patterns and suburban schools.

We are well aware that our two case studies represent an all too limited population. We know, too, that we have not reached adequately all sections of the population of the two suburbs investigated. This study does not purport to be a definitive study of Roosevelt and Westbury. We believe, however, that we have gained insights and raised questions that will make a future research design more pertinent to the actual conditions to be surveyed than would have been the case without this year's exploration.

Selected Population

In selecting individuals to be interviewed in Roosevelt and Westbury, we attempted to reach as broad a spectrum of the population as possible. Starting with high-ranking school officials, we asked each person interviewed to recommend other local residents or school employees we might talk to. From the names received we selected individuals of different points of view, with widely different community roles, of different ages, sex, color, and socioeconomic status. For the most part, we found people cooperative and happy to talk with us. There were exceptions, so that occasionally, despite persistent attempts, we were forced to give up the possibility of seeing certain key individuals.*

*We encountered more reluctance to meet with us on the part of whites than blacks. We can only speculate about the possible reasons. Perhaps they felt that with the epithet "racist" used so casually today, they would be subject to such labelling should they express any negative attitudes toward the schools or community changes. Perhaps they felt the anonymity we promised would not be respected.

We felt, however, that we learned to know our communities well and to appreciate their problems, their hopes, and their fears.

A breakdown of the interviewed population by race in each community follows:

	<u>Black</u>	<u>White</u>	<u>Puerto Rican</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Roosevelt</u>				
School	5	9	-	14
Community	14	13	1	28
<u>Westbury</u>				
School	10	11	-	21
Community	<u>11</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15</u>
Total	40	37	1	78

ROOSEVELT

In the mid-1950s, the welcome mat was out. Advertisement for housing in black newspapers in New York City had showed a black couple looking at a beautiful tree-lined street of a suburban community. Residents of this suburban community formed committees to welcome new black arrivals.

The community was Roosevelt, a white, middle-class Long Island suburb located some 45 miles from New York City. This community of Roosevelt was to be a model for the integration of black and white Americans.

Less than ten years later the welcome mat was taken in. Instead of welcoming committees there were committees to stabilize the population of Roosevelt, to curtail the entrance of blacks and the exodus of whites. What had happened to this dream of a model integrated middle-class community?

Fifteen years ago the one-square-mile-community of Roosevelt was indistinguishable from the many other "all white" communities in Nassau County.

Although the great suburban movement of the 1950s was primarily a white phenomenon, the census reports during this decade revealed a trickle of blacks who found their way into such all white communities as Roosevelt and Westbury. Most of the new black residents in Roosevelt were the middle or upper middle class. Many were doctors, teachers, and psychologists. Some were a part of the sports and entertainment world. In many instances their occupational status was higher than most other white residents in their block. The new residents, eager to be a "part of things" in this community, joined some of the local organizations and clubs such as the PTA of their neighborhood school, the Dad's Clubs,

the Sportsman Club and others. Yet most of these residents retained firm ties with many of the fraternal groups, clubs, and churches in their old urban neighborhoods.

The willingness on the part of some white residents to have realtors sell their homes to blacks encouraged many blacks to look for homes in Roosevelt. With the exception of a few communities, most of the 93 communities in Nassau County were closed to the black family as potential homeowners. Thus, the number of black homeowners increased in Roosevelt so that by 1960 they represented 18 percent of the community.

The next five years were a crucial turning point for the future of Roosevelt. By 1965, the black population had doubled to about 35 percent of the total population. These new residents were not longer middle income, but were in part the migration of poor blacks from the rural South and low income and welfare recipients from nearby urban areas.

For the first time in the history of Roosevelt there was a decrease in the white population. The white community decreased from 10,509 to 9,073. Segregated housing patterns became apparent, and the southeastern section of Roosevelt became known as the "Negro area." Blacks represented 40 percent of the school population. Some of the neighborhood schools were predominantly black while others were predominantly white.

This changing complexion of Roosevelt was evident in many other ways. More black faces were seen on Nassau Road, Roosevelt's single shopping area; "for sale" signs were seen on the lawns of many homes; realtors ran many ads in black newspapers, and white residents were subjected to constant pressure by realtors on the phone, by mail, and in person to move out and to sell their homes to blacks. Organizations

composed of both black and white middle class residents were formed to stop the tactics of real estate agents, to stop the flow of welfare recipients into the community, and to encourage white residents to remain.

Now, in 1970, there is no longer a particular section of town known as the "Negro area." Blacks represent 80 percent of the town population and 85 percent of the school population. Thirty-five percent of the school population is on welfare. The schools, under pressure from the state and the NAACP, have been reorganized into a modified Princeton Plan, and there has been extensive revision of the curriculum to include courses and programs to meet the needs of the students. Some middle income black and white parents are critical of the school system and the administration over the reorganization that eliminated the neighborhood school. In addition, they're critical of what they feel has been a "remediation" of the schools' curriculum to benefit the poor.

Newsday articles, with their glaring headlines of "Roosevelt District an Academic Swamp" and "The Making of a Black Ghetto," angered residents and may even have spurred the exodus of whites and middle class blacks. Property taxes have increased and are now among the highest in the country. The residents have defeated the school budget for two consecutive years.

The schools are under the extreme financial pressures of an austerity budget. As a result of this crisis, some advanced courses and programs have had to be eliminated from the schools' program, much to the anger of middle class parents. The additional elimination of hot lunch programs, free books, and bus transportation for children has placed severe hardships on the welfare recipients.

Students have expressed their discontent with the conditions and policies of the school by holding a three-day protest and by presenting to the administration a list of demands. In addition there have been confrontations between black and white students.

Many white and some black parents have placed their children in nearby private or parochial schools.

Efforts by the superintendent and School Board to secure additional funding from state and federal governments were unsuccessful. A challenge by the Board of the inequality in the distribution of Title I funds was also unsuccessful.

In March of 1970, the president of the School Board resigned, indicated he saw no end to the rise in taxes and no way for the school to get the needed financial aid. In June of 1970, the superintendent of the schools for two years resigned for similar reasons.

Community organizations, such as the PTA, councils, and other groups, no longer have the participation and interest of the residents to make them effective community forces.

WELFARE

Roosevelt has been called by some a "dumping ground" or "beachhead" for welfare recipients. In the last few years the welfare population in Roosevelt has increased to about 35 percent of the school population.

Of the 93 communities of Nassau County, it is significant to note that only 11 of these communities contain most of this dependent population.

The Nassau Department of Social Service indicates simply that a person is eligible for welfare benefits. There is no formal system for

the distribution or placement of recipients. Recipients are required to find their own houses. The conditions of the house and rent are then subject to the approval of the Social Service Department. The welfare recipient usually winds up living in Negro areas because the zoning and housing laws discriminate against him both racially and economically. Although the Nassau County Open Housing Law has been "on the books" and "effective" since August 1969 and prohibits discrimination in the rental or sale of most types of housing, it does little to help the low income black or white. There is little low cost housing available in the suburbs. Proposals by the county and state for the building of low income or moderately priced houses in suburban communities have been fought against and voted down by both black and white homeowners. The trend towards the increase in minimum lot sizes as zoned by many suburban towns increases the cost of property and is aimed at excluding the lower income homeowner. In addition there is the deliberate exclusion of apartment buildings in many towns. The small percentage of rent control properties in the county are at a premium, and landlords have become increasingly selective in the rental of their properties. They rent mostly to solvent, middle-age, middle-class whites. Thus, the high incidence of this dependent population in Roosevelt is a result of housing policies, zoning laws and policies of the Social Service Department over which the community has had no control.

The impact of this dependent population on the community of Roosevelt is significant in several areas.

Since welfare recipients are not homeowners, and do not pay taxes, they are not resources for school revenue. This has placed the burden

of taxes on about two-thirds of the town's population. In this instance the large majority of the solvent population are middle class blacks.

Many welfare recipients live in substandard housing owned by out-of-town realtors. Because these homes are poorly kept, they are subsequently assessed at a low valuation for taxation purposes. This low assessment of property further decreases the resources for school revenue.

Since many of the newer residents are from nearby urban and rural southern areas where their schooling has been inadequate, the adjustment to Roosevelt's college-oriented curriculum has been difficult. To some extent this group has forced the administration to make a long-needed re-assessment and re-evaluation of the curriculum to best fit the needs and interest of all of its students. New courses and programs were instituted and some of them were remedial-type courses to provide intensified instruction for the slow student who may have been a product of inadequate schooling. However, it has only been within the last two years that the school administrator has recognized the imperative need for revision of the curriculum. For example, an assessment made by the schools in 1968 showed that of the students who had been in the school for less than two years, 73 percent were below minimum state standards of competency. The administrator knew from this assessment that the present reading program was not adequate and proposed a remedial and developmental reading department. All students are required to take some aspect of this reading program. The below-grade students receive special and intensive help in reading.

Before assessments such as these were made, many slow students entering the school for the first time were indiscriminately placed in special education classes or classes for the emotionally disturbed. In

1968, a parent of a child in a special education class, frustrated by the school's refusal to discuss test results, led a group of parents in a protest about criteria used for the placement of their children in special education classes. This inquiry prodded the superintendent to conduct a full scale investigation of these classes. It was discovered that many children, mostly black, had never been tested or were given inappropriate testing but nevertheless were placed in special education classes. In addition it was found that these children received no scheduled testing while in these classes, and, consequently, remained in the special education classes in the system "track" for several years. The case was taken to court. Subsequently, procedures and criteria for testing students were established.

Middle class blacks who moved to Roosevelt or any other suburban area did so for many reasons. High on this list was the "good suburban school image." Factors included in this image were the college-oriented curriculum, the high percentage of students who went on to college, the minimal amount of discipline problems, sufficient money for adequate facilities and good teachers, and, to some extent, the power a resident possesses when voting on school issues, school budgets, and school boards. Roosevelt's middle-income blacks are paying to retain this image. When this image is jeopardized or damaged in any way there is open resentment, against the jeopardized institution for allowing it to happen, the individuals or the groups whom they feel have caused it to happen, and against the laws and policies of government institutions which have "forced" it to happen.

REAL ESTATE

In 1964 a local realtor was fined \$100 for refusing to sell houses to whites in the Roosevelt area. This charge was made by the United Organization of Roosevelt, a group formed for the purpose of keeping the community integrated. Black and white middle class members of this organization worked against the blockbusting and scare tactics used by many realtors in the area.

When Roosevelt began to become integrated, real estate agents canvassed the area by sending out cards. These cards asked if residents planned to move or to sell their house. Some white residents indicated that they had received as many as six cards from one of these companies in the span of a year in addition to those cards received from other companies.

Agents also subjected residents to constant telephone pressure to sell their homes. In these phone conversations, agents talked of land depreciation and low valuation of their homes if residents did not sell quickly.

The most direct contact was a door to door canvas by realtors. In addition to discussing depreciation of land, realtors spoke of the prospect of socialization among black and white teenagers which could possibly lead to marriage. The constant pressure of these scare tactics caused many residents to leave.

In addition, real estate corporations and individuals in and outside of Roosevelt bought or leased houses in all-white blocks. Welfare families with large numbers of children or "undesirable tenants" were placed in these houses for short periods of time. The visibility of these families frightened many people into moving away.

The community's response to this action has been through such organizations as the United Organization of Roosevelt. These residents have gone to the County Human Rights Department with this problem but have received little help. They had filed a complaint with the New York State Real Estate Board. Nothing was done by the Board except to suggest that each individual write local real estate agents and ask the agents not to pester them any longer. A cease and desist order granted by the court was sent to local realtors. These activities stopped for several months but then they resumed.

The tactics of the agents are continuing to this date, though most residents wonder why since the community is now predominately black. In terms of further building, the community has about reached its saturation point. There is almost no land available for additional homes. Middle class blacks who can afford homes in Roosevelt are no longer moving into the neighborhood.

THE GOVERNMENT OF ROOSEVELT

At the heart of Roosevelt's difficulties is the seemingly innocuous fact that it is an unincorporated community. As such, it lacks any semblance of local government. It has neither a mayor nor a city council, nor any equivalent. It has no locally elected officials other than the members of its School Board. Roosevelt is part of the town of Hempstead and is merely one of 93 communities in Nassau County.* Its residents have little or no control over any aspects of government that do not pertain directly to the school system. Representation to the town seat is based on regions. Roosevelt is part of a region containing

*There are three towns in Nassau County -- Hempstead, North Hempstead, and Oyster Bay.

other communities such as Baldwin, Uniondale, and Freeport. The town representative for the region lives in adjacent predominantly white community of Baldwin. Thus there is no governmental or political structure in Roosevelt. The only paid official is the school superintendent, who is selected by the School Board.

The School Board, composed of five members serving four-year terms, has the authority to set its own school policies in congruence with the education laws of New York State. Each year the School Board proposes a school budget for its operating expenses of the coming year, and all residents may vote on the budget. These are the only elections in which Roosevelt residents can directly participate in their own government.

The lack of any local governmental or political structure and the lack of direct community representation has left Roosevelt without any power base from which to protest the injustices inflicted on the community by the Welfare Department and real estate agents. Therefore any power the community can exert is contingent solely on the dedication and influence of individual school officials, community leaders, and citizens. It simply has no representatives in any governing body. These conditions explain why the School Board and the superintendent have resorted at times to rather sensational publicity concerning the school district's plight.

PUBLICITY

The headline "The Making of a Black Ghetto" which appeared in a Long Island daily newspaper shocked and angered the residents.¹⁷ The black ghetto referred to was Roosevelt. Written in a sensationalistic style, this article depicted a poverty-stricken black ghetto community. It was the first of a number of newspaper articles about Roosevelt.

While some residents say that some points in the articles are true, they all agree that the overall tone of sensationalism and the distortion of some facts produced anger and fear among residents and a negative image of the community to outsiders.

Some residents believe this publicity "caused a split in the community between welfare recipients and other residents." It was felt to have been "downgrading," "to have had a negative effect on the children," and "to perpetuate the myth of inferiority." Most residents of the community pointed an accusing finger at the school officials for the unwanted publicity, and said "it was unforgivable" and "those responsible for it should be gagged." Few people acknowledged that the underlying reasons for the publicity was an effort to bring attention to the community in order to secure additional funding.

An article that appeared in March of 1970 had as a headline "Roosevelt District an Academic Swamp."¹⁸ This article reported the resignation of the school board president and stressed the high tax rate, the low pupil achievement, and the futile efforts of the board and superintendent to get additional state aid.

Even those who acknowledged and felt that they understood the reasons for the publicity also recognized that it had hurt the citizens by lowering real estate values, making it harder to obtain school insurance, and reducing the school's ability to secure a bank loan. They favored publicity as an effective way to get help, but had hoped it would not have been so adverse.

Attention was indeed focused on Roosevelt. Residents and school officials in other communities spoke of preventing their community from becoming "another Roosevelt" or of "going over the brink like Roosevelt."

When the superintendent of schools suggested that a solution to the financial crisis of the Roosevelt schools would be to merge with surrounding districts and to bus out school children, surrounding school superintendents immediately objected to this suggestion.

An example of another effect of the publicity concerns a program developed by the Unitarian Church in nearby Garden City. This was a program to bus underprivileged preschool children into Garden City where there would be a different atmosphere in which the children could play and learn. But the parents of Garden City rose up in opposition to this program. They were afraid that if Roosevelt's children came, the parents might follow.

The publicity has brought attention to Roosevelt but it has not been successful in attracting additional funding.

SCHOOLS

In September of 1964, the NAACP sued the Roosevelt Board of Education for failing to provide a racially balanced school system. It charged that, because of segregated housing patterns, one of the four elementary schools was 99 percent black, one was 99 percent white and the other two schools had a sprinkling of black students. It was also noted that while the black school was overcrowded, there were empty classrooms in the other schools. This charge made by the then active NAACP came shortly after the 1964 decision by the New York State Commissioner of Education to force an end to defacto segregation in the schools. To dramatize their efforts to integrate the schools, on September 4, the NAACP boycotted all of the stores on Nassau Road, Roosevelt's single shopping area.

At this time the black population represented about 35 percent of the community and the influx of the welfare population was being felt by the residents. In fact, black committees and other groups were making attempts to stabilize the population of Roosevelt, to retain the integrated character of the community. There were many people opposed to these block committees working to maintain an integrated block, just as there were many people in favor of it.

Before 1964 there was little interest on the part of most of the board members in integrating the schools. Newer members of the board who were aware of the changing community and its implications broached the subject of school integration several times in school board meetings, but this problem received little attention. It was only under pressure from the NAACP that any action was taken in this direction by the board. For one year the board discussed how to accomplish the integration of schools before doing anything about it. They considered open enrollment plans, the shifting of certain classes and other alternatives as well as the Princeton Plan. Some board members argued that the district adopt a plan that would result in complete integration and take care of future population growth and changes as they occurred.

In November of 1966, the Board adopted a modified Princeton Plan for implementation in the school system in September 1967. This decision had been made exclusively by the Board. There were no meetings with the community nor was there a survey of community attitudes prior to the adoption of the plan. After the adoption of the plan, the Board held an open meeting to explain the plan to the residents. The plan was well received and there was little backlash, although the Board did receive some letters of complaint.

Although whites had been moving from Roosevelt for several years, most of the residents interviewed felt that the reorganization of the school system to the Princeton Plan and the loss of the neighborhood school increased the number of white residents who moved. As one said, the Princeton Plan "threw the liberal in Roosevelt into a state. They wanted integration by neighborhood, but didn't want their children bused all over the community. So they moved out after the damage had been done."

It is significant to mention here that during the same year of the adoption of the Princeton Plan, a Negro ran against an incumbent white for a place on the School Board. The issue was strictly black versus white and the election drew the biggest vote turnout ever in Roosevelt. Out of 3,700 registered voters, 2,800 voted -- over 75 percent of the population. The white candidate won by a narrow margin of about 1,400 to 1,300. The black candidate has since moved from Roosevelt.

Under the modified Princeton Plan, there are no neighborhood schools. There are four elementary schools attended by students from the whole school district. Students are bused to these schools, and the state pays for 90 percent of this transportation.

There is one junior and one senior high school. Before the high school was built in 1963, Roosevelt high school students went to Freeport High School. At one point there were plans to consolidate the Roosevelt district with the Freeport district. When the combined Board voted against consolidation, the residents were able to have their own high school.

The educational program of the school district runs from pre-K to the 12th grade and offers a full academic curriculum. Eighty-five percent of the 4,135 students are black.

Of the 286 professionals in the school system, about 25 percent are black.

Within the last two years, the new administration of the schools has conducted an active recruitment program to hire more blacks at all levels in the school system. In 1968 there were no black administrators in the system. Now seven of the twenty administrators are black. This number includes three assistant principals, the first black female principal of an elementary school in Long Island, and an assistant to the superintendent. The chairmen of the new Remedial and Developmental Reading Department and of the Afro-American Studies Program are black.

The turnover in faculty has been a gradual one with many teachers remaining who have been in the school for six or more years. Teachers who have seniority and are at high steps on the pay scale are reluctant to leave.

CURRICULUM

Revisions in the curriculum have come as a result of demands made by students, and reassessment of the needs of the students.

Afro-American Studies Program

The Afro-American Studies Program is one of the new additions at the senior class level. This course, designed for one year, offers the students one semester each of Black American history and African history. It attempts to cover in a limited way the many subjects in these areas and provide students with information not received in previous years. As an elective course, the response has been good and enrollment high with blacks and a few whites. A major complaint by the instructors and students has been the need to teach so much about each area in a short

period of four months. The instructors (the African history teacher is white) have worked on the revision of the whole social studies curriculum, trying to introduce more Afro-American topics into other courses. Many outside speakers have been brought to the school in an attempt to relate the program to the events of today.

In addition, other organizations have sponsored programs on this theme. A public meeting sponsored by the PTA showed a 30 minute film entitled, "Black Price," followed by an address by John Henrik Clark, a black writer and editor. The high school sponsored an all day conference with several workshops on various themes concerning blacks. Students were free to attend the workshops of their choice. Speakers included black writers, black educators, and members of CORE and other organizations.

Reading Programs

The reading program is a two-part effort consisting of concentrated reading instruction in the elementary schools and a separate reading department in the secondary grades. In the elementary school, children are grouped according to reading ability and encouraged to move along at their own speed. In the earlier grades, a new program, the Alpha One Reading Method, is used.* Parent reading aides have been recruited and are used to give teachers more time for individual students.

*This is a new reading program for grades K-3 in which the alphabet introduction takes on the characteristics of people, and these characteristics are associated with letter sounds. It culminates in reading and writing short stories using two and three syllable words. Alpha One is a Reading Program published by New Dimensions in Education, Inc., Jericho, New York 11753.

At the secondary level, there is separate remedial reading and developmental departments. This program focuses not only on reading development for those students below grade level, but also for the continued development of students on and above grade level.

Other Programs

Revisions have been made in the science curriculum at the junior and senior high school. There is now a program for advanced placement students and one for students less successful in science which places more emphasis on the "discovery" method of teaching science.

New textbooks and materials are being used in other areas such as the adoption of a new series of books in the high school English curriculum. This series was adopted at the suggestion of a black student. An experimental pre-K program for three year olds began in the spring of this year. In addition to stressing such areas as listening, reading, speaking, and language development, this program includes learning how to get along with others, how to cope with one's emotions and how to express one's self. Parents have been invited to take part in the development of the overall program.

One program sponsored under Title III brings artists, singers, dancers, and other types of performers to Roosevelt. Many of the performers are black. It is not only pleasurable for the students, but serves as a means of identification for the student and as motivation for classroom follow-ups.

Other programs include a basic education program for adults and a breakfast program for elementary schoolers. School officials discovered that many youngsters were attending school without breakfast and because

of the lack of a lunch program in school and of cutbacks in welfare allotment, many were going without the noon meal as well. Many volunteer parents have helped to make this program a success.

STUDENT PROTESTS

"The schools are being ruined because the administration has allowed the students to take over the schools. The authorities in the school have lost all control and are receiving no support from the administration. If I had the money I would move."

"I think the protest led by students was beautiful. The students did what the parents should have done if the parents had taken more interest in the schools."

"The problem is one of discipline! Discipline has to come first. Until a school room has discipline, learning is not guaranteed. Don't pay your taxes until the schools start doing their jobs properly and keeping the children under control. If this doesn't work they should close the schools and let the students out to act as animals the way they seem to want to be. If this doesn't work, we should board up our houses and move."

The first two comments were made by black parents; the third by a white parent. The statements were made to us shortly after the junior and senior high schools were disrupted by student protests in March of 1970. Students, discontented with physical conditions and some policies of the school, presented a list of 24 demands to the superintendent and faculty. This list included such items as: 1) repair of lockers and change of locks; 2) hot lunch program or cafeteria services; 3) a thorough cleaning and fumigation to rid the building of insects and

rodents; 4) bathroom should be kept open at all times; 5) male personnel should not be allowed in girl's bathroom; 6) students should not be hit or insulted by teachers; 7) the organization of a student Advisory Board; 8) organization of a discipline committee; 9) more black teachers; 10) better teachers; and 11) more relevant curriculum.

This list was presented to the superintendent on a Monday afternoon, and the students held a silent march. On Tuesday the classes were disrupted, and many students did not attend school. Parents concerned about the disruption came to school to talk to the superintendent and were invited into special meetings with students. Although this was not the first demonstration at the high school, the faculty and parents were visibly shaken by the events. Some faculty members thought the demands to be "foolish and supercilious" and stated that students did not know what was meant by the word "relevant." Some parents spoke of the students as "animals" and "not knowing how to stay in their place." Many whites felt that the disturbances were organized and instigated by outsiders.

On the other hand there were parents who felt the demonstration was "very healthy" and that "more adults should join with the children." And contrary to the myth about parents and suburban schools, most parents had been apathetic and had never taken time to visit the schools. One teacher commented that he had seen more parents in those two days at the school than he had seen in the eight years on the faculty.

As a result of this protest, some of the conditions in the school were improved and policies changed. The lockers were repaired, the school was cleaned, and the bathrooms were opened. The administration is

is working on the organization of a student advisory board and a discipline committee.

In an earlier demonstration in 1969, students had asked for a black studies program, more black teachers, better teachers, "soul food" in the cafeteria, and pictures of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy in the hall. The black studies program was one outcome of this demonstration. Another was the formation of a grievance committee, which meets with an assistant principal to discuss student complaints.

The relationship between black and white students has been a strained one. Although there is interracial dating among the students, there were also several serious confrontations in the spring of 1970.

As a result of the black-white confrontations, white parents have been uneasy. Some were afraid to send their children to school. But parents of graduating seniors were reluctant to keep children out of school for fear their children would not graduate. One white parent called the State Commission of Education indicating that she would not send her child to school under the circumstances and demanded a tutor paid for by the state.

White parents continued to criticize the school and administrators, alleging lack of student control and favoritism of school officials towards the black students. Another concern was the lack of communication by the Board to the community about the protests. It was stated that the Catholic School Board had met concerning the protest but that the Roosevelt School Board had never called an official meeting with the parents about the protest.

From the sentiments expressed about the schools by these white parents, it was expected that the white proportion in the schools (15 percent) would be even smaller when the doors opened in September of 1970.

FINANCES

The Roosevelt school system is in a financial crisis. The enrollment has rapidly increased, and there is an increasing demand for school facilities, programs, and faculty. Independent school districts such as Roosevelt depend on the passing of a school budget each year for the operational expenses of the school. This budget is voted on by all residents of the community.

The amount of money available for school programs and facilities depends in part on the taxes paid by local property-owning residents. In this respect, communities vary markedly in their ability to produce funds. Some school districts that contain no industry or commercial property have little base to provide adequate resources for funding. The school district of Roosevelt has 17,600 people in one square mile. There is no industry and little commercial property for taxation. It is one of many suburban school districts that must rely heavily on the taxation of resident property owners as a resource for school funding. The high influx of welfare recipients, who are not homeowners, the decrease in the assessed valuation of many properties, and the increase in the operational expenses has caused the school board to approve a tax levy of \$11.44 per hundred dollars of assessed evaluation for the 1969-70 school year. This is an increase of \$3.27 over the school rate for the previous year.

The school budget has been voted down by the residents for two consecutive years. This has placed the schools on an austerity budget, forcing the school district to cut special programs for advanced pupils, field trips, the hot lunch program, free books, and transportation. The budget was defeated for many reasons. High taxation was perhaps one of

the major reasons for the defeat of the school budget. Other reasons included displeasure over the reorganization of the schools, criticism over the deletion of some advanced courses, and the inclusion of remedial courses, as well as a reaction to student protest.

The total assessed valuation of Roosevelt is around 25 million dollars with 4,135 students, this averages to little more than \$6,000 per student. The operating school budget for Roosevelt is close to \$5,000,000. The superintendent has estimated that \$4,000,000 more is needed to provide an adequate educational program.

The gap between actual monies available and need is somewhat supplemented by state aid to education. The state's aid to local school districts has been based on three fundamental principles:¹⁹

1. Tax-sharing: utilization of the broad tax base of the state to augment the narrow base of property taxes available to local districts.
2. Equalization: proportionately greater assistance to poorer districts to assure a minimum level of support.
3. Incentives -- for programs of educational improvement identified by the state as desirable.

In addition to state aid, the federal government has played an increasing role in the financing of education in the last ten years. Many of the new programs in the schools are sponsored with monies from Titles I, II, III, and IV. In most instances, the money is given to the state and distributed through state control and formula.

In New York State the expenditure by school districts for education continues to increase at a rapid rate. The average expenditure per pupil during 1968-69 is estimated at \$960. The state shares this

support of education with local school districts up to a specified expenditure determined by the state. The ceiling for the year 1969-70 was increased to \$860. In accordance with the present formulas, the state provides 49 percent of the support of the expenditure per pupil up to the established ceiling of \$860 in a district of "average taxable wealth." Since some school districts have greater taxable wealth than others, the percentage provided by the state varies from district to district with a minimum guarantee or "flat grant" of 36 percent.

There is a great disparity between the formula by which aid to education flows from Washington and Albany and the needs of such poor districts like Roosevelt. The Roosevelt School Board, upon examination of county allocations of these funds, indicated that the formula for distributing their funds was based on 1960 census data and other criteria that were inappropriate to the program's original intent, that of providing financial assistance to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. In the 1968-69 school year, Roosevelt received only \$141,000 for more than 700 students on public assistance and it was noted that other districts on Long Island received proportionately more for less students. Although the Board's position received wide support from the community, through the press, radio, and television, its suit challenging the state's method of distribution of Title I was lost. However, it was felt that while legally unsuccessful, it had brought attention to the question of distribution of Title I monies and could cause some legislative changes.

Community Participation

The pulse and life of a community depend on the people and their participation in community affairs. In most studies done on the

influence of social participation in a community, factors such as education, income, occupation and relevancy of problem are determinants of social participation. Other factors such as population size, communication networks, length of time in community, also determine to some extent the amount of participation. In Roosevelt another significant factor has emerged concerning the residents.

In Roosevelt two of the basic ingredients of social participation are lacking, strong leaders and participants. When middle-class blacks moved in to Roosevelt, they joined many of the local groups such as PTA, Block Associations, Dads Club, and other social organizations. However, to the detriment of building a sound "community" in Roosevelt, they retained firm ties with their church, fraternal groups, and other social groups in their old communities. In addition, most black males were commuters to the urban area, and it was often necessary for the wife to work. This left little time for building strong community organizations and other institutions. As low income residents moved into Roosevelt, the newness of residents to the neighborhood, the ineffective communication from organizations to them, their lack of contact with leaders or neighbors who may have been participants, their lack of time and financial capacity, and difference in interests and values, all operated to limit their participation.

With the stress today on community involvement, the relationship between the school and the community is an important one. In Roosevelt, this relationship has been limited. With the exception of some activities by the NAACP and the PTA, other groups and organizations have had little contact with the schools. Parents, students, and faculty have stressed the lack of parental interest and involvement in the schools

and the general apathy of the community as a whole. Most parents rarely visited the schools unless specific issues arose, such as the recent student protests. The Roosevelt residents vote for school board candidates and for the school budget. For most, this is the extent of their involvement with the school. However, within the last two years the school administration has taken some strides to initiate community participation. A school-community office was created to act as a liaison between parents and the school. This office has attempted to keep the community informed, not only of school news and programs, but also of events in the community. There has been greater use of parents as para-professionals and teaching aides. Parents have also been encouraged to participate in the developmental aspects of some school programs. The School Board has planned monthly meetings in different locals on different subjects to encourage greater community participation. In addition, adult education programs have been organized.

At present, several community organizations in Roosevelt are engaged in varying degrees of activity. The best known is the Roosevelt Community Council. Funded by the county, it was formed in the early part of 1968 as a group to represent all segments of the community and all community groups and organizations. Many saw this organization as being a possible means of stabilizing Roosevelt on an integrated basis, but others felt it was too late to think of stabilizing the community. Some residents have expressed disappointment with the activities of the council, indicating that it does not truly represent all segments of the community, but, rather, is middle-class oriented.

Other organizations include the Hausch Manor Community Association, the Utopia Civic Association, and the Baldwin Woods Civic Association.

The Hausch Manor Group is composed of blacks who are considered more liberal than members of the other two groups. They are described as less affluent and relative newcomers to Roosevelt. There has been some attempt by this group to attract members from all parts of Roosevelt. The Utopia Civic Association is composed of conservative blacks with longer periods of residence in Roosevelt. The Baldwin Woods Association is composed of middle-class whites who have lived in the area for a long time and are generally arch conservatives. Some blacks have recently become a part of this group. This area is near the Baldwin community line, and many of the residents of this area have changed their mailing address to Baldwin Woods so as not to be identified with "that Roosevelt." These organizations tend to be most active during the school board elections and during the time when issues concerning the school budget are voted on. In fact, the Baldwin and Utopia groups often form a coalition on issues and candidates.

A new organization, the Welfare Tenants Association, is composed of blacks on welfare. They have been particularly active in some housing problems, the Special Education incident,* and, to some extent, during voting and registration. But this group, like the others, has not been too successful in its efforts to maintain continued participation.

There are also branches of the NAACP and CORE. In Roosevelt, these groups tend to become active only during crises. Many whites think that CORE instigated the disturbances at the school and some of the unrest in the community.

*Low income black students had been placed into Special Education classes automatically -- without any testing. See section on Welfare.

The PTA is no longer felt to be a viable organization. Attendance at meetings has decreased sharply. Many feel that the reorganization of schools, that is, the loss of the neighborhood schools, has been a major cause of the decline of the PTA. In addition, the PTA is often looked at by blacks as a middle class white oriented group.

The activity of most of these organizations is short-lived, becoming extremely active only when there is a crisis. Few have long-range programs. The lack of strong leadership and participation from the citizens has limited the role of these organizations as strong and effective forces within the community and in their relationship to the schools.

WESTBURY

Westbury High School, a sprawling modern complex situated on what was once an estate in the exclusive village of Old Westbury, appears to to casual observer to be far removed from the racial and social tensions which have beset many inner-city schools. It was here, however, that a fracas between black and white students on March 29, 1968, led to the first shutdown of a public school on Long Island because of inter-racial hostility. This hostility rose to such intensity that the local school board decided it prudent to close both the junior high and the senior high schools. The junior high, which was the site of a stabbing, again involving black and white boys, was closed for a day and a half. The senior high school remained closed for a day longer.

Hasty meetings were called by the Board of Education with the administration, faculty, parents, and students. Two problems had apparently initiated the fighting: 1) hostility between certain groups of blacks and whites, and 2) Negro grievances concerning the program and operation of the schools, most particularly the senior high school.

Grievances centered around the following problems:*

1. Lack of Negro members on the high school staff, particularly the availability of only one part-time Negro teacher to whom the Negro girl students could turn.
2. The attitude of a small number of teachers toward Negro students.
3. Concern that the tracking system and the marking system discriminated against the student who does not readily learn from books.

*List appeared in a newsletter sent to all residents of the school district by the Board of Education over the signature of its President, Carl L. Lumborg.

4. The lack of sufficient attention of Negro culture and history in the curriculum.
5. The inadequacy of the curriculum in providing proper training and guidance for the slower student.
6. The lack of any Negro counselors in the Guidance Department.
7. The lack of voice on the part of students to have their grievances heard.
8. The lack of clearly defined and presently unenforced school rules of conduct and discipline.

As a result of these meetings, the Board took certain immediate actions. A black woman teacher was made a full-time Dean of Women (she is now an assistant principal). A physical education teacher, a white male popular with both black and white students, was named full-time Acting Dean of Students. A system of hall passes and other attendance reforms were put into effect. Restroom monitoring efforts were increased. An elective course in Afro-American History was approved.

The Board promised to take other steps to alleviate grievances. A Negro guidance counselor was promised for the high school. Other black faculty were to be added (a commitment the Board claimed it had already made). The tracking system in assignment of classes was to be reassessed. A faculty curriculum development group was to be formed to work over the summer on the articulation of Negro studies in the social studies program for all grades, and on the development of a program for the slow student.

In addition, a bi-racial student advisory committee was formed at the high school to meet periodically with faculty, administration and the School Board. This group conducted an assembly when school reopened on April 4, and is attributed with easing tensions and clearing up many student, as well as professional, misunderstandings.

Sporadic disruption continued until the end of the year, but were handled individually and with apparent, if uneasy, success.

School reopened in the Fall of 1968 with many changes evident at the high school. The number of Negro teachers increased from three to 12. Three black guidance counselors were added to the staff. Two classes in Afro-American history were offered as senior year electives, while curriculum guides and units on black history and culture were being articulated into the social studies curricula on all grade levels in the school system. The bi-racial council continued to operate.

Early in October the high school principal resigned and his place was taken by the popular Dean of Students, who by then had been elevated to the role of assistant principal. Things were thought to be under control.

In February 1969, the Superintendent of Schools, who had been with the district for 15 years, during which time the population of the district had tripled, retired and a new superintendent, also a white man, was appointed.

On March 14, 1969, however, another incident at the high school again set off a period of racial conflict. The trouble arose over an incident in a classroom where a white teacher and a black student fought over where the student should sit. The teacher pushed the student into a seat. The result was two formal lists of demands to the School Board, one by the Black Student Union of Westbury and the other by the Organization of Concerned Black Parents, a group which apparently arose as a result of the incident.

The students demanded the dismissal of the teacher involved on grounds of "immoral character and conduct unbecoming a teacher." The

Board did not find sufficient evidence for such dismissal, though the teacher was relieved of his duties for two days to "emphasize" the Board's disapproval of his behavior.

The students demanded, also, faster implementation of the black history program, but the Board insisted the program was functioning and approaching full implementation. Students were assured, also, that black literature courses, which they demanded, were being prepared for the 1969-70 school year.

Demands for an all-black advisory committee to the Board and for black-taught sensitivity training for all white teachers were met by the Board with a statement of its belief that all factions of the local and school communities must be included in any committee or program. The Board claimed it had already taken steps to set up a Task Force for Equal Educational Opportunity made up of parents, teachers, and students from all segments. Beginning in 1968-79, an in-service human relations program for the schools' staffs was promised, but it was to be for all teachers and would involve a series of instructors. Suggestions for the choice of instructors were solicited from the students.

The demands of the parents' group were more nebulous. They demanded a system of accountability for teachers who abused black children, physically or verbally. They demanded that punitive measures not be taken against black children taking part in peaceful demonstrations and that black guidance counselors be allowed to be "effective" for all students, particularly blacks. The Board responded by stating that these things were already being done. It added that demonstrations which interfered with classroom instruction, school safety or order could not be condoned.

A fourth parental demand to identify and punish students who had burned a cross on the school lawn was referred to police to whom the Board had given all information on the incident in its possession.

The 1969-70 school year saw no major disruptive incidents along racial lines. During the period of our study, the schools were closed for several days following the killings at Kent State and Jackson, Mississippi. Such school closings at the time were widespread on Long Island, as well as in other parts of the nation, and appeared to reflect a general outpouring of feeling on the part of students rather than reflecting racial unrest. During this time a bomb threat was received at the administration office, but was the work of a crank.

AN OVERVIEW OF WESTBURY

In order to understand what led to the 1968 and 1969 disruptions in the Westbury schools and what the chances are that Westbury can avoid further dislocations, we must take a look at the communities which make up Union Free District No. 1, popularly known as the Westbury District, a suburban area 20 miles west of New York City. The district is, in general, an affluent-appearing community of neat and often elegant homes and gardens. Many of the residents commute to New York. Train service is frequent, with at least one train an hour to the city. Other residents work in nearby defense industries, though these have recently felt the effects of the countrywide economic recession, so that some residents have lost part or all of their income. The shopping area in the Village of Westbury, however, appears to be flourishing, with few empty stores.

The school district, which covers five square miles and contains 22,000 inhabitants, includes the incorporated Village of Westbury and the unincorporated villages of New Cassel and Old Westbury. Only the Village of Westbury has an elected mayor and other town officials. The only purely local officials elected in the unincorporated villages are members of the Board of Education, who are elected as representatives of the entire district, not its individual parts.

The Village of Westbury contains about half of the school district's children. A small section of the village is in the Carle Place School District, but most children in the village go to the Westbury schools. Westbury proper has a large Italian-American population as well as many Irish Catholics. Several of our interviewees indicated a strong conservative influence among the Catholic population. Church officials themselves take no public stand on public school matters, though they were described as sympathetic toward the problems faced by the public schools. Good working relations apparently exist between the public schools and the church, St. Brigid's. St. Brigid's runs a parochial school, the largest in the Long Island diocese, enrolling 1,300 pupils in grades 1-8, 600 of whom are from Westbury and most of whom are white. How many Westbury district children attend other private schools, of which there are several in Westbury and many others within reasonable distance on Long Island's North Shore, is not known, since no survey has been made to determine a figure.* The cost of sending children to private school, added to the tax burden of the public schools, were

*One local school run by a synagogue which serves Old Westbury and surrounding communities reports no enrollees from among its Westbury School District families.

frequently mentioned by interviewees as a contributing factor to the difficulties the district has had in recent years in getting public support for its programs.

The Village of Westbury contains, also, a large Jewish population, many of whom live in so-called Jewish sections. They came to Westbury in large numbers about 15 years ago, when the farms began to give way to homesites, and are very supportive of the public schools. Finally, there is a so-called Protestant section which also serves as home for most of the blacks who live in the Village, though there are blacks scattered in other sections.

The blacks in Westbury proper are almost always referred to as middle class. A local rabbi described them as professionals with the same hopes and ideals as whites in their neighborhoods. The school district, unlike many suburban schools, has always had a small number of black students, because Negroes were employed as household and farm workers. When the farms and estates gave way to housing after World War II, blacks began to settle in Westbury in small numbers. The pace quickened in the 1960's. Many of the blacks interviewed told us they had moved to Westbury because they felt more welcome there than in most towns in the New York Metropolitan area. Real estate dealers were described as polite and willing to show them decent housing on the "right side of the tracks."

For the most part, whites have not fled from Westbury as blacks have moved in. No incidents of block-busting were reported to us. No incidents have taken place in integrated neighborhoods. There have been some neighborhoods, without discernable pattern, where the white population panicked and moved, while in seemingly identical circumstances

neighborhoods remained integrated with blacks and whites buying homes. Many young white couples, in particular, are moving into Westbury specifically because they want their children to experience integrated neighborhoods and schools. There can be no doubt that there is a sizeable white, as well as black, population in Westbury dedicated to residential and educational integration. It must also be kept in mind that the majority of the black students in the schools do not live in the Village of Westbury, so that residential integration has been relatively easy with educated and affluent blacks becoming the neighbors of whites. It is in the schools that the real test of integration is taking place and here we have conflicting reports to be discussed later.

Old Westbury makes up two square miles of the school district. It is an area of large estates which send relatively few students to the schools. Luxury housing of less than estate size occupies some of the area, and children from some of these homes attend the public schools. The high school itself is located on the edge of Old Westbury on what was part of a large estate. Its location necessitates the busing of most students, although many have cars and are allowed by school and family to drive to school.

Finally, there is the unincorporated village of New Cassel, originally Italian-American in the days of truck farms and estate gardens, but now an area made up chiefly of Negroes, though there remains a small remnant of the Jewish population who preceded them in an area of New Cassel separated from the rest of the village by a busy highway.

It is New Cassel that sends most of the black students to the district's schools. The population is economically mixed. It is an area

of smaller and less expensive homes than are found in much of the district. Still there are in New Cassel many homes in the \$30-40,000 class. The area attracted many middle class blacks in the early 1960s, when builders and real estate dealers advertised widely in Harlem. There had always been a small black population in New Cassel because it was an end point on the underground railroad before and during the Civil War and because many blacks working on estates and farms in the area lived there. After World War I, the black population was about 5 percent, 15 years ago, 15 percent, and by the end of the 1960s, New Cassel was predominantly black.* Westbury school district followed the pattern of the development of black suburban enclaves described in the introduction of this report.

The middle-class blacks who live in New Cassel were described by interviewees in different terms from those applied to the professionals in Westbury proper. Although New Cassel has its solid middle class doctors, teachers and other professionals, many residents are middle class in outlook, but with less financial means than "middle class" may imply. These residents strapped themselves to buy their homes, often necessitating full-time employment of wives and mothers in order to meet expenses. In fact, one interviewee who knew the area intimately, reported that though real estate men in New Cassel were willing to show homes to blacks, some insisted on proof that both husband and wife would be working and even on statements from doctors that wives planned to have no more children before deals could be closed. We have no

*We received conflicting dates of the increase of blacks in New Cassel. The important point is the relatively rapid rise in blacks.

verification of this behavior on the part of real estate agents, but many people spoke of the financial problems of many of the area's black middle class.

In recent years the placing of welfare recipients in New Cassel has quickened the flight of whites, as well as of some blacks.* Many welfare recipients find their own living quarters with the help of friends and relatives in the area. Others are placed in motels in the area while the county Welfare Department hunts for homes for them. The Nassau County Welfare Department has a rather informal system of welfare placements. Welfare recipients go wherever low cost housing is available and wherever there is no organized effort by local people to exclude them. Several instances were reported to us of groups, both black and whites, banding together in other towns to enforce quotas on welfare cases entering their areas. In Westbury there have been efforts, again by blacks as well as whites, to keep out welfare people, but without success. Instances were reported of blacks objecting to welfare recipients and the low cost housing that attracts them.

Blacks in the district feel that they lack power and influence. Three black men (one serving currently) have been elected to the school board, but most who have run have been defeated, despite the fact that 45 percent of the district's school enrollment is black. In the last election only 500 of the district's eligible black voters (reported to us variously as 1,500-3,000 people) actually did vote. The black

*Although not all welfare recipients living in New Cassel are black, almost all children in welfare families are black and, therefore, it is the black welfare family that has the greatest impact on the schools.

candidate was defeated, but he received at least half of his 1,006 votes from white people, assuming all 500 blacks voted for him.

One reason suggested for lack of effective participation was that blacks who might otherwise have turned their efforts to local activities maintain their ties with communities from which they came, through church and social affiliations. Their hearts and feelings are with their former neighbors, while they look upon their new homes as physically and educationally advantageous places to raise their children. Physical isolation from other blacks, which sometimes takes place in integrated suburbs, reinforces this pattern.

Welfare recipients, some directly from the South, have no history of involvement. Often they do not read or write. Many are women with families who haven't husbands at home. They are apt to feel lost and unsure. Their more affluent black neighbors may look down on them, referring to them as "corn breaders," if they are from the rural south. Such scorn may be a reflection of fears of what will happen to middle class black children lumped together in many white minds with disadvantaged blacks. It has been reported elsewhere by ex-welfare recipients that while on welfare they felt burdened with guilt and shame and not worthy of a voice in their communities.

Agencies and groups are beginning to appear in Nassau County, as elsewhere, to fight for welfare rights and services. Many lower class blacks were described to us as resentful of the middle class blacks' failure to "support their brothers." In our study, however, we found many blacks with middle class jobs, homes, and education who were devoting much of their time and energy to helping their less fortunate black neighbors. Often they complained of apathy on the part of those

they were trying to help. There can be no doubt, however, that there is a great deal of suspicion and hostility between black groups.

Interviewees repeatedly claimed that divisions and dissension among black groups weakened their effectiveness in local affairs. Differences ranged from the economic -- poor against middle class -- to the ideological -- CORE against NAACP -- to mere struggles for personal power. Almost every black person interviewed lamented the situation but felt helpless to change it. The lack of an effective political base in New Cassel, in which local problems might be worked out through compromise and which would assure a tenure of one group for a stated period of time, works against the development of sophisticated political techniques. The only area where New Cassel blacks might vote on purely local matters is that of the schools. Here they are hindered by the fact they are competing with white interests and established organizations from the other villages in the district, as well as among themselves.

It is obvious that the district represents extremes in needs and in ability to fulfill them. Although primarily well-do-do and middle class, the district was described to us by one administrator as a microcosm of New York City, encompassing everything from Park Avenue to Harlem, with Harlem getting bigger. Despite this, it is a wealthy community with an assessed evaluation of \$58 million. Nevertheless, it is in bad financial straits. It is the only Long Island North Shore community to receive less money from the State in 1969-70 than in 1968-69. Of a budget of \$10 million, it receives only \$2 million in aid. The rest must come from local taxes, primarily real estate. In Westbury this taxation falls chiefly on the homeowner, though there is some local defense industry.

State aid is determined by a formula based on property evaluation and on attendance. In Westbury not only has enrollment gone down, but also absenteeism has risen. Since aid is in part based on average daily attendance (an extremely unrealistic formula) absenteeism, which is higher among blacks than whites, is costly to the district.

Most of the new programs introduced into the district -- and their costs -- are traced in the public's mind to the growing black population. This is true even though Title I and II funds absorb much of the cost of programs. Ninety-three percent of the district's budget is mandated by law, so a budget defeat does not cut down taxes by a significant amount. It does, however, emphasize the programs for the poor, because they continue or are actually increased through the development of programs the state will fund. Defeats have the added effect of polarizing the community into groups divided on lines of race, economic level, and/or ideology.

The 1969 budget was defeated, forcing the school district to operate on an austerity budget. In 1970, the budget was approved by a margin of 27 votes on its second submittal to the public. Our interviewees suggested the following reasons for the opposition to the budget.

1. Unhappiness over busing and the belief that a defeat would eliminate busing and bring a return of the neighborhood school.
2. Unrest in the schools.
3. Unwillingness to pay for remedial efforts.
4. The general rise in prices accompanied by a recession in jobs and some businesses.
5. Dual school expenditures of those who have children in private schools.

6. The feeling among some that schools are coddling and placating blacks and radicals.
7. The feeling that the welfare department should meet costs arising from its housing policies.
8. The easy availability of a local school budget as a means of voicing generalized unrest and dissatisfaction. Such a protest is direct and immediate.

THE SCHOOLS OF WESTBURY

As of September 30, 1969, there were 4,582 students in the public schools of the district (down from 4,920 two years earlier). Of these students, 44.67 percent were black. The percentage of blacks varies according to grade level. Prekindergarten classes are approximately 86 percent black because this program was restricted during the 1969-70 year almost entirely to economically deprived children. Title I funds financed the preschool program, and these funds are available only for the economically deprived. A group of concerned parents, white and black, whose children were not eligible for the program, banded together and raised funds privately to finance two additional preschool classes. They felt their children and the disadvantaged blacks would benefit from more racially and socially integrated classes. Next year, operating on a full budget, a preschool program will be open to all children in the district should their parents wish to send them. Preschool is not mandatory.

The total elementary school black population is 52.87 percent,* including pre-K. The total secondary level black population is 35.24

*Unless otherwise stated, all percentages are for the school year 1969-70.

with 41.04 percent the figure at the junior high and 29.73 percent at the senior high.

The dramatically lower figure at the senior high level has been attributed to several factors. The rise in numbers of black students has been rapidly increasing in the lower grades, as young black families with young children and welfare families with large numbers of small children move in or as established black families in the community take in young foster children, often for the express purpose of making available to them a quality education. These families tend to be larger than their white counterparts.

Another contributing factor suggested is that the dropout rate is higher among blacks than whites, though there are no figures to verify this assumption. It is at the 9th grade that students from the local parochial school enter the public school system, virtually all of them white. We were told that most do not go on to other private schools. Their numbers would make the biggest impact at the senior high where they would be in all three grades.

Yet another suggested reason for the lower percentage of blacks than whites in the senior high is the higher value, generally speaking, of white property than black. The higher the value of property, the more blacks and younger white families are excluded. The average age, therefore, of white homeowners is higher than that of black. Their children are usually older and are in the higher grades. Many white residents bought their homes when property values were lower. Even the young white families now moving into Westbury in order to be in an integrated district do not counterbalance this trend toward older white children. Their families are small and many are not yet of school age.

So far as we have been able to determine, the value of property in West-bury has not suffered since the rise in numbers of blacks became evident. Property is still in demand and still expensive in most areas. This favors older, affluent whites with small families. It was predicted to us several times, however, that the older white children graduate they will be replaced by blacks coming up from the grades, and some residents pessimistically predict an all black school system.

In the early 1960's it became evident that, though there were no totally white schools in the district, de facto segregation did exist. At that time the neighborhood school concept was in full flower in the suburbs, with children attending the elementary schools closest to their homes. The New Cassel elementary school, then a K-3 school, was rapidly becoming all black. After black parents picketed the school in 1963, attempts by the school board to correct the situation by making the school a 3rd grade school for a wider area were stopped by court injunction. The Park Avenue School, located on the edge of New Cassel, was built and opened as a 1-6 school with 40 percent of its pupils black, but there was every indication that figure would grow.

The then New York State Commissioner of Education, James Allen, has ordered affected school districts to correct de facto segregation, and the State's Division of Inter-Cultural Relations promised financial assistance to districts implementing programs aimed at correcting racial imbalance.

Under pressure from black parents, and the state, the Superintendent of Schools devised a plan to create racial balance and equality of all factions in achieving it. The New Cassel Elementary School was

made the district's Early Childhood Development Center for all of Westbury's pre-kindergarten and kindergarten children. White children were bused into the area. The change, with New Cassel children from grades 1-3 being sent to other schools, created an overcrowded situation at the Dryden Street School. The State in 1966 provided three "relocatables" (portable classroom buildings) and paid for their upkeep and rental until 1969 when the Westbury District assumed their cost.

By 1967 imbalance existed at the Park Avenue School. The school was made an intermediate school, housing all district children in the 5th and 6th grades. Four former neighborhood schools became 1-4 schools to which black children from New Cassel were bused. The plan assured all pupils of half their elementary schooling in their own neighborhoods and half in a school to which they would be bused. Blacks would be in their neighborhood, New Cassel, in pre-kindergarten and kindergarten and again in the 5th and 6th grades, with children living more than 3/4 mile away bused in. Whites would attend neighborhood schools in grades 1-4, with the majority of blacks bused in. Yearly shifting of school boundaries and consequently of pupils has been necessary to maintain racial balance.

The plan met the approval of the state, which approved a budget of \$137,891, of which it provided \$87,415, but the changes were not implemented without a struggle. A Neighborhood Schools Association, made up largely of middle and lower middle class white residents was formed to fight the changes, but in the school board election held subsequent to the formulation of the plan, candidates favoring the plan were elected.

Opposition to busing, nevertheless, still exists. Many of those interviewed expressed the belief that the school budget had been defeated in 1969 for the first time in 11 years because, in part, some voters felt less money would result in the elimination of busing. The board vowed this would not happen, and it did not happen. The budget for 1970-71 was voted down in May, 1970, but when re-submitted in June, it won by 27 votes. All programs are intact for the 1970-71 year.

One school board member told us that complaints and demands of "black militants" are extremely vocal, but the "white militant draws into his shell" and is heard only at the polls. It is certainly true that as interviewers we had no luck in getting to speak with white residents who were recommended to us as spokesmen of the conservative viewpoint. We had a little trouble of this sort in Roosevelt, but were able to reach several articulate spokesmen for the white conservative point of view. In Westbury we were met by cordiality from this group, but got no interviews. The mayor of Westbury, described by some as conservative, was too ill to see us during the period of our interviews. Though described by many as a conservative town, everything we have learned indicates that there is a large enough group of white liberals in the district who, when added to the blacks, have created a majority in favor of integration. We must keep in mind that this was one of the few towns in the New York metropolitan area that made blacks feel welcome. As one black guidance counselor put it, "Westbury is an old stable community, but it sets the tone in innovation [in school affairs]." There is undoubtedly a growing number of people who are upset and angered by recent developments (or rumors of developments)

in the schools, and the budget votes reflect this, but they are not yet ready to speak out in unequivocal terms. They probably do not think of themselves as racist, a charge they would certainly be subject to if they vociferously voiced their concern over increased school costs, disruptions in the secondary schools, fear of drugs, fear of devaluation of property, and fear of a lowering of educational standards.

That Westbury is becoming more conservative cannot be denied, but it is not yet uniformly so. Many liberals are essentially conservative about schools in that they expect the schools to educate their children for college and responsible social positions in harmonious surroundings. One black woman, interestingly, criticized the schools as not being good enough academically, because the whites in Westbury could afford to send their children to mediocre colleges and didn't aim at the Ivy League.

THE SCHOOL PROGRAM

In discussing the programs in the Westbury schools, emphasis will be placed on those changes in the programs and policies of the educational system that seem to have been instituted because of the increase in black enrollment in the schools. The President of the Board of Education and others emphasized repeatedly that busing was not instituted in the district merely for purposes of "integration," which he feels implies inferiority of one group, but to enrich the education of all children by making better programs available to everyone and by teaching children respect for all people. It is true, nevertheless, that the presence of blacks has necessitated changes, some demanded by blacks themselves and others to fill the needs of children from

backgrounds diverse from the white middle class patterns found in most suburban schools. Many of these programs are designed to improve the education of all the children and many may have unexpected dividends for all, but others are specifically for black children. One school administrator stated, for example, that revisions in the tracking system are being undertaken on the basis of the philosophy of the Coleman Report. The Coleman Report indicates that, all other things being equal, the black child in classes with a majority of whites does better academically than his counterpart in a black or predominantly black class. That social and ethnical, as well as academic, rewards accrue to white children in such classrooms is undoubtedly true, but these are not the primary rationale behind such changes.

Special committees have been set up to work summers to devise Black Studies programs for the schools. As we have seen, an intensive course in black history has been added to the electives available at the senior high. In social studies and English, programs have been developed to be integrated into the regular class work of all grade levels, K through 12. This summer (1970) a black music curriculum is being prepared for full integration into the existing program. The philosophy behind the development of the programs is in keeping with the district's policy that all children shall benefit from additions to the curriculum. It is felt that black contributions to the various areas of study should be an integral part of the education of all children. Black material, therefore, becomes part of the day-to-day work of the students and is not singled out for special emphasis or for special groups of children. The black history elective, however, is designed

specifically as a crash course aimed at making up for the omissions in past schooling experienced by the older children. It will be discussed more fully below under high school programs. Guidelines from the State Department of Education for the developing and implementation of black material form the basis of the work in Westbury, but with additions from many different sources. In order to implement the new programs, two curriculum coordinators, one for the elementary level and one for secondary level, have been appointed, one black and one white. They work closely with the district's Director of Pupil Personnel Services, a white woman, as well as with teachers and other administrators.

The school board has also adopted new personnel policies. A policy of recruitment of black school personnel has been implemented. All school personnel interviewed who had responsibility for hiring stated that only qualified teachers of any color were hired, but between equally qualified blacks and whites, the blacks would be given preference in filling any openings. The problem seems to be the limited supply of black teachers, who are in demand in most metropolitan school districts.

Blacks now total 12 percent of the teaching staff. In the secondary schools guidance departments, there is a 50-50 ratio of black and white counselors. As yet there is no guidance staff in the elementary schools. Black assistant principals and deans have also been appointed at the secondary level.

Other special personnel have been hired primarily to meet the needs of educationally deprived children. There are 600 ADC families in the school district with school age children, up 200 in one year (January 1968 to January 1969). The children in these families require

special services at school. The district, which a few years ago had no social worker on the school staff, now has four and could use a fifth. Ten years ago there was one school psychologist and now there are six. Guidance counselors have been increased from five to eleven in five years. Although the population of Westbury has tripled in 15 years, the chief reason given for these increases was the needs of black children, primarily those on welfare.

Many changes in staff and staff functions are aimed at closer liaison between school and home. The school nurses watch students closely and work with the home and the visiting nurse services in an effort to see that children receive needed medical and dental care. Their aim is to bring people and the clinics together. Transportation to the clinics in the area is paid for by welfare funds. There are also two paraprofessionals who work closely with parents, usually in their homes, providing transportation and other assistance to help parents take part in school and community activities, as well as to take advantage of community services. The paraprofessionals set their own hours in order to serve parents best. The schools also employ 77 teacher aides, many from poverty families, who help the children bridge the gap between home and school culture. There is a foster parents' association in Westbury serving the needs of the area's many foster parents, but it is not part of the school system.

The school district has formed a committee made up of an equal number of school personnel and hard-core poor to work together in making decisions on the use of Title I funds. The committee was described as an effective one. One outcome of this cooperative effort was the formation of a special preparation class to help any child

entering the district who lacks normal educational skills for his grade. Some students from the South, for example, were entering the 11th and 12th grades unable to read or write. The special preparation class is conducted by a master teacher and a full time aide, accommodating ten students of normal intelligence at a time. The program is completely individualized, providing the best facilities and the most modern techniques. A social worker works concurrently with the children's parents. Parent teas are held to make new families feel welcome and at ease with the school activities. Students are told it should take six months to a year to get them ready for regular classes, and they aim for this. A psychologist keeps track of their progress and promotion to regular work takes place as soon as possible.

Included as part of the special preparation class is a cultural program. Students are taken on trips, ride subways, and visit points of interest. There are at least 100 students entering the district a year in need of this special help, according to school estimates. Many come up from the South because they have relatives in New Cassel. The program is less than a year old, so that a realistic assessment of its success cannot be made, but to date it seems to be working well. Title I funds provide most of the financing required.

Blacks have demanded changes to fit their needs. Many whites, particularly those connected with the schools, applaud the efforts to meet these needs, but some whites were described to us as feeling that the budget has risen because of efforts to placate blacks. These people feel the welfare department should handle many of the services now being provided by the schools. Money and effort are seen by some whites

as going all in the direction of compensatory programs for blacks, draining services from the stable, prepared student of whatever color.

The district has introduced a program in so-called sensitivity training. Hurried efforts in this direction at the high school followed the disruptions there in 1969. In some ways they were effective, but some teachers found them too disturbing. Now more organized efforts are being made. Sensitivity groups meet voluntarily, but many teachers are wary of them. A weekend retreat under the direction of a trained leader was held last spring, with great success reported by participants. It is hoped that by word of mouth reports by participants more teachers will be persuaded to join. Teachers in the district were described by one administrator as consisting of a group of "beautiful" people who are already sensitive to the needs of their students, a group who refuse to change, and the vast majority who want to understand and are working toward that end.

PRE-KINDERGARTEN AND KINDERGARTEN CENTER

The history of the Early Childhood Center has been described above. The pre-k program was open during the 1969-70 school year only to disadvantaged children under a Title I grant. Next year all pre-school children whose parents wish them to attend and who have reached their fourth birthdays before December 1, 1970, will be eligible. Although we do not have figures on the number of eligible children, a look at last year's figures gives us some indication of the enrollment the district is expecting. Last year less than half as many black children attended pre-k classes as enrolled in kindergarten. Only 1/5th

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as many white children (13 percent of the total pre-k enrollment) attended pre-k as attended kindergarten. It is assumed most of those attending were not eligible, but attended because of classes run with independently raised funds*. Next year the state supported¹ Title I program will continue, while local taxes will pay for children not eligible for State support. The budget allocates a little over half as much funds for the locally supported part of the program as will be spent on the State supported program. Although the district obviously expects an increase in enrollments of more affluent children to a little more than 1/3 of the enrollees, it does not expect such children to make up their proportionate share in the population. Assuming that at least half of the district's black pre-schoolers and most of the white are not indigent, one would expect that 2/3 of enrollees would be locally supported.

The pre-k program, as designed under the structures of Title I, deals primarily with readiness skills and bridging the gap between verbal and non-verbal children.

The kindergarten classes, held in the same school as pre-k, run about 53 percent black, 47 percent white. There is no tracking in any of the elementary schools. Programs are sought which permit individual progress in heterogeneous groupings. The Peabody Language Kit was singled out by the kindergarten teacher interviewed as particularly effective. It teaches language skills ranging from the simple to the

*A few black children attended also under this program financed by parents.

¹The state provides approximately 83 percent of the program's funds.

complex, but with the children participating together. The kit includes a wide variety of visual and aural aids, including hand puppets which are used to de-emphasize the teacher as source and judge of learning. Children participate in the activities by dealing with questions and areas of varying complexity. This is done casually and without emphasis on excellence. Each contributes according to his level. The children are expected to learn from one another in a natural way.

A great deal of time is spent on the meaning of body language, on movement to music, and on expression through art. Since there are many Italian speaking children in the classes, southern dialects are easily equated with other languages, equally good, but different from standard English. Both Italian and black children enjoy teaching the other children special words, phrases and gestures from "their" languages. All children are made aware, however, of the necessity of knowing standard English as the most useful means of interacting with one another and the community at large.

Black studies are included in the kindergarten curriculum. At this level a great deal of music by and about blacks is included and will be expanded following this summer's curriculum workshop. Poetry by such black authors as Paul Lawrence Dunbar is heard, discussed, and coordinated with the study of nature. The accomplishment of black scientists are also tied in with the year-long topic of interest -- nature and the seasons.

Specific guidelines and suggested activities have been developed by the Elementary Curriculum Coordinator and her committee (made up

of one teacher from each elementary grade). A great deal of time is spent on the development of each child's identity and self-concept. "Who Am I?" games and activities, tied in with black studies, help define that question for both black and white children.

The teacher interviewed, herself black and a resident of Westbury with school age children, expressed optimism and satisfaction with the program. She cited as a positive sign the fact that none of her pupils (in May) had difficulty with the listening part of the Metropolitan Reading Readiness Test, though a number of her black and Italian pupils had had problems with it at the beginning of the year.

Grades 1-4

At the four elementary schools, implementation of the black studies curricula has been going on much as it has in the Early Childhood Center. Statements by various individuals interviewed indicate that successful implementation depends greatly on the individual teacher. Some blacks interviewed expressed a general disappointment with the elementary school programs, and a few were severely critical. How much of this criticism is focused on current programs and how much is based on past experience is hard to judge. As we have seen, black parents picketed the New Cassel school in 1963 to try to force integration of the school system largely on the grounds that the New Cassel program was inferior. At that time the schools used a form of track or ability grouping system and children were graded according to performance within their own track or group (this is still true at the secondary level to some extent). A child receiving a grade of 90

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might be doing good work only in relation to others of his ability as the school perceived it. Parents often discovered the meaning of grades only when they questioned decisions about such school matters as assignment or non-assignment to a foreign language class upon entering the junior high school. Blacks interviewed indicated that the majority of children in New Cassel unknown to their parents, were performing below grade level. Testing showed they could not, upon entering the junior high, be placed in A or B tracks, which precluded foreign language study.

Early in the 1960's, a group of black mothers, described as middle class, felt that they were unable to solve this and similar problems through the PTA or from the schools and formed an independent Mothers' Group of Westbury. They set out to improve in particular, the reading skills of underachieving children. A few white mothers and children joined them. They started their work with pre-schoolers, working on reading readiness skills. As more and more families from the South, Harlem, and Bedford-Stuyvesant moved in, the mothers began giving older children remedial help. Parents, some of whom had been teachers, did most of the work in classes held in their own homes. High school students were enlisted as tutors. Eventually the schools were opened after school hours to provide space for the programs and some transportation was provided by the district. The programs were apparently very successful and some became the bases of regular programs in the schools. Since the schools began to provide more readiness and remedial programs, the group has branched out into other activities not directly connected with school programs, such as providing clothing for needy

families and sponsoring a Cotillion of Black Pearls to raise scholarship funds. Its emphasis on educational achievement within the existing curriculum and on charitable projects reflects a decidedly middle class outlook.

The school system claims it no longer groups children in the elementary schools according to ability. Grouping is heterogeneous for most activities, though, as we shall see, there are exceptions to fit special needs. Many people interviewed were not aware of this change. Many feel that the black child is still at the bottom and not getting what he needs.

School personnel, however, feel they are doing a good, innovative, constantly improving job. A study is now being made to compare the achievement levels of children according to length of time in the district. There is evidence that achievement rises with length of residence in Westbury, but the study has not yet been completed. Should this prove to be true, it could be interpreted to mean Westbury schools do a good job, though it could reflect, also, changes in the makeup of those who move into the district. As we know, welfare families are relatively recent additions in the community. It is not known if considered in the study.

One of the major new programs in the elementary schools is Project Lawyer (Language Arts Workshop for Younger Elementary Readers). This is a program developed and tested in the summer of 1969, funded under Title I and thus limited to children of economically deprived background. The task of the program, according to the Coordinator of Elementary Curriculum, is "to stimulate academic achievement in the underachiever

by providing the necessary self-image." Children diagnosed as under-achievers are placed in the program by means of a quick placement test. Beginning the program in January, 1970, ten teachers took part this past school year.

The project employs assorted visual and aural aids including Acoustiphone Listening Centers with headsets, Sights and Sounds Cassettes and Recorders, games, records, and posters. One of the most effective techniques has been the use of Polaroid cameras by the children. They take pictures, developing verbal skills in talking and writing about what they have photographed. The emphasis is on what the teachers refer to as experiential learning.

Teachers involved in the program are enthusiastic. An expanded program is planned for the coming school year.

THE JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Westbury Junior High School seems to be a source of both hope and concern for most of the Westbury residents interviewed. The school occupies a two building, interconnected complex which formerly housed the high school as well. It is located in the heart of the Village of Westbury across the street from the public library, necessitating busing for New Cassel residents, as well as for students from other areas. Although rather imposing from the outside, the inside of the building is dark and drab in the mode of many older school buildings. It has also had its share of troubles. Students at this level tend to imitate high schoolers, so when there is trouble there, it usually spreads to the junior high.

The school was described as having been an educational disaster by many informants from both school and community. Teachers resigned from the staff at a rate about one-third greater than that at other schools in the district. It was at the junior high level that black parents discovered the discrepancies between their children's actual and reported performance. Teachers told us of the abysmally low reading ability of many incoming students and the previous lack of any program to correct it. Interestingly, most of these same people voiced cautious, but definite hope for the future of the school.

This year the school has a new principal, a white man formerly a teacher in Ocean-Hill-Brownsville in Brooklyn. He is viewed as almost a potential savior of the school. No one spoke a bad word about him. Certainly his enthusiasm, strength, and obvious ability, as well as his sense of proportion about himself, his staff, and his students were

communicated to the interviewer. One comes away from the school feeling that if anyone can do the job there, it is he — with the help of some very able people, including his two Assistant Principals and the head of the school's Guidance Department, all of whom are black, and several teachers interviewed.

In the past five years the black population in the school has risen from 25 percent to 46 percent and promises to keep increasing as the grade school population grows older. Whether it will increase also, due to whites leaving or sending their children to private school in larger numbers, depends, in part, on the program the school offers. Changes covering many aspects of that program are being made.

1. Tracking

One of the most important changes is in the tracking system, which is being de-emphasized and revised throughout the school system. The junior high has a three track system: A for honors students; B for students doing grade level work; and C for below level students. Many parents mentioned a fourth track, D, and said that most black children were put in tracks C and D. Track C includes students doing poor work, but with IQ scores above 75 and, therefore, not eligible for the district's ten Special Education classes for the mentally retarded and emotionally disturbed.* These classes are probably referred to by some as track D.

In the past, track A was almost exclusively white, and heavily Jewish, with track C almost exclusively black. Now there are efforts

*Westbury has a larger number of such cases than most school districts, because Nassau County maintains special facilities in the town for such cases. People move to the district to be near those facilities.

to make track C as small as possible and to use it as an intensified remedial program. Most students in it are borderline in tested intelligence, scoring more than 2 grades below grade level on standardized tests. There are a few students in the track who lack confidence or who refuse to move up because their friends are in track C. Guidance counselors work intensively with these children.

Track A is also being de-emphasized and made more flexible in its approach to subject matter and admission requirements in an effort to include more black students of high potential. The school is concentrating the bulk of its efforts on track B, guided by the conclusions of the Coleman Report.

Subjects are tracked separately so that students may be in more than one track in any given year. The emphasis is on flexibility, in order that students may be moved up whenever they are ready. One black mother said that in her opinion it was harder for a black child to enter the top track than for a white, but once he got there, he was never dropped, though whites sometimes were.

2. Reading.

In one recent year, 50 percent of the class entering the 7th grade were below grade level in reading. Most of these students were black. This high percentage was attributed to various factors: new students to the district from the South and from welfare; programs at lower grade levels not geared to the needs of the black child; poor teaching of reading in general; anti-black attitudes of some teachers. Parents were up in arms and the school had no effective means for correcting the situation. Two years ago the district hired a reading

specialist for the junior high. She found that, except on paper, no remedial reading program existed. She started from scratch, forming classes, writing Title I and II funding proposals, accounting materials on hand, and reshuffling classes to suit different needs. Testing programs were instituted, both for the use of the school and to meet Title I funding and evaluation requirements. The school reading program tended to be flat in the middle and thick at the ends of the normal curve with deprived blacks on one end and Jewish students on the other. This was true of all three Junior High grades.

In diagnosing problems and analyzing skills, the remedial teacher found that previous teaching of reading for her students, (whether they had been taught in Westbury or elsewhere) had been poor with no accepted reading system recognizable -- no phonics, no blending, no recognition of short vowels, poor listening skills, etc. A massive emergency remedial effort would have to be made before a preventive system could be developed.

And this is what is being done. This teacher has taught blacks in other towns and feels there is nothing intrinsically inferior in black reading ability. She feels that these children are reacting to the prevalent social evils and poor teaching. She is working toward a reading resource center for the whole system and thinks the chances of developing a good one are promising.

Although this reading specialist feels that militant attacks on the reading programs at the elementary level tend to be "nasty," she feels they have a point. The schools are trying to integrate the State's black curriculum into their programs at all levels, but they continue to use the non-integrated Scott-Foresman Basal Readers.

3. Social Studies and Other Subject Areas

In the past few years the climate of the junior high has been quite charged, racially, and therefore an intensified black studies program has been instituted. In the 7th and 8th grades all students take the same major subjects except for remedial work and foreign languages. In 1970-71 these grades will study a two-year chronological, cultural-historical program in social studies developed by the Educational Development Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts, called The Study of Man. The program begins with animal life and early human life, emphasizing how they are different, both physically and culturally, and how different cultures evolve in response to different needs. The objective of the course is to develop mutual respect by breaking down barriers of misunderstanding and fear. The course continues into the 8th grade with increasingly close-to-home social, economic, and political problems. In the 9th grade, students have a choice of electives in the social studies field, including one in black studies.*

Foreign language study has, in the past, created problems at the school. Students were permitted to start the study of a foreign language in junior high, if they had good grades and high test scores on reading tests. Students reading below grade level did not participate. Now the school offers a general introduction to foreign languages in the 7th grade. The course looks at what language is and how one language differs from another.^b The program attempts to eliminate the

*A total of 17 electives in various fields will be available for 9th graders to choose from.

^bOne of the interviewers had a similar program in the 7th grade over 30 years ago.

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in program planning, but in bringing to bear on all subjects the ideas and wealth of diverse experience of students. Each child, he feels, will be a part of the total school experience if his interests and talents are tapped and appreciated.

5. Graduation Program

Another particularly interesting and unique innovation in the junior high is the program planned for graduation (1970). At one time medals were given at graduation in each academic subject to the top student in the subject. The medals invariably went to students in track A. At the 1970 graduation medals were planned in each subject for each track level. Certificates of Merit would be given to runners-up. The awards are designed as an incentive and, therefore, in the view of the school's administration, should not be limited to the gifted.

In addition to the expanded prizes, all local community organizations were asked to participate in the graduation exercises by awarding medals to students who best symbolize some characteristic or ideal the organizations stand for. At the time of our interviews with junior high personnel, seven local organizations had made plans to take part in the graduation exercises.

Also invited to sit on the stage during graduation were all local church pastors and rabbis as another means of building community harmony.

6. Special Services and Teacher Activities

A team of social workers from Adelphi University has been active in Westbury since October, 1969. College students under the supervi-

sion of a trained social worker go into the community and work with groups of residents to try to increase interaction between school and home. A psychologist supervises internes from nearby hospitals in mental health and psychological counseling and testing in the schools. These services are available to the residents of Westbury at very little cost, because the work of the internes and trainees is free and much of the supervisor costs are borne by Title I funding. The programs illustrate the valuable aid schools can get by calling on nearby universities and agencies.

Within the school program itself classes are scheduled so that all teachers in a given subject area have a common period two or three times a week, when they can meet and deal with program needs as they arrive.

Special problems of students are met by working in joint conference with the principal, psychologist, nurse, counselor, and possibly members of the training teams mentioned above, who meet every Thursday in what amounts to case conferences. Parents and teachers are sometimes involved. As a result of this intensive and personal attention to individual problems, only two students out of a school population of 1100 were expelled during the 1969-70 school year.

7. Special Programs

A bi-racial student council deals with the problems arising between black and white students. Their motto is "Togetherness as It Should Be." Teachers reported that the public thinks there is a great deal of racial tension in the school because of past incidents, but that a look around the school now belies that impression. To the

authors, the students appeared good-natured, and an easy rapport was evident among students and staff. Once a week the school has a "dress down" day when students appear wearing such casual outfits as shorts and slacks for girls and other old comfortable and casual clothing for boys. The clothing is taken by all in a spirit of relaxation and fun.

The school recently presented a highly successful production of Eye, Eye, Birdie, put on by the dramatic club and employing the talents of blacks and whites, students, teachers and administrators. Every opportunity possible is made to relax the barriers of suspicion and hostility which threaten so many schools today. The school administration feels this is best done by involving the total school population in joint projects.

THE SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

The senior high school has been the focus of most of the overt unrest in the district. It is difficult to separate the general atmosphere of discord and unrest which besets education today and the unrest due to racial tensions. Westbury went through the 1969-70 school year without major racial unrest, and this should be viewed as evidence of positive action on the part of the schools. This action, exemplified by the changes in personnel mentioned above, is viewed by some as merely reactions to conditions and demands and not the results of thoughtful planning and commitment to the needs of the black child. Was the black dean appointed as a safety valve, or does he serve a positive philosophical commitment? Is the black history elective merely palliative? Opinions of those interviewed were varied and often contradictory. The public high school is viewed by many Americans as the institution

which decides the fate of their children. Much of the feeling directed toward it results from personal and group hopes and fears, as well as from actual commitment to an educational philosophy. In examining the high school program and the opinions of interviewees, this fact should be kept in mind.

1. Black History Elective

Among the demands presented to the school board during the period of unrest in the Spring of 1969 (see above) was one for a black history course. The district claims it was already planning courses of this nature, but that it takes time to do a good job. In the meantime, resentments and frustrations intervened and it found itself with a demand on its hands. The result is a course emphasizing black history through the study of blacks who have made significant, but often unheralded, contributions, particularly in America. The course has been designed to help motivate black students, as well as to educate blacks and whites. Some educators interviewed claimed that there is an abundance of material on the subject from which to design a course. Others feel they are groping and learning and improvising as they go along. The teachers attempt to approach the subject in a "contemporary" manner, stressing politics, philosophies, and so-called black ideology.

When speaking about the black history course in general terms, interviewees were enthusiastic. Specifically, however, it was obvious that most were disappointed, though sympathetic and hopeful. Black students said they found the course too easy, superficial, and/or boring. One expressed the feeling that the demand for black history had been a hasty and mistaken one, that the demand should have been for black

studies stressing current problems and relevancies. The absentee rate from one section of the course was described as almost total. Parents, too, reluctantly voiced disappointment. A few went so far as to call the course a "farce," but for the most part there seemed to be a feeling that they liked the people teaching the program and hoped it would soon develop into a good course. It was demanded by blacks, developed under their direction, and is taught by them. Blacks have a stake in seeing it goes well. The chairman of the Black Studies Committee, the popular Dean of Students, said he has "carte blanche" in choosing and using material for the course. Whether the course will develop into a worthwhile one or become the target of charges of tokenism remains to be seen.

In its first year the course reached very few white students. It is an elective for the twelfth grade. By then many students find themselves with little leeway for experimenting, because of college entrance requirements. There may also exist, for many, some reluctance to intrude on what is viewed as black territory. The charge that whites cannot understand black experience was voiced in the statement of one black teacher that it was good to have all black classes in this area, because then the teacher did not have to contend with "white hang-ups" and possible confrontations. The teacher himself attributed the lack of interest on the part of whites to the conservative nature of the white population of Westbury and their resentment of special courses for black study when there is no such special treatment of Jewish or Italian Studies. This feeling may be true among adults to some extent, but among white students the search for identity does not seem to be

through Jewishness or other ethnic categories. On the basis of what is admittedly inadequate material, the authors feel that Westbury is a liberal community, with a sizable conservative element currently bolstered by the general feeling of uncertainty pervading the country. The charge of "conservatism" is not adequate to explain the dearth of white students in black history classes.

2. The Guidance Department

Guidance counseling appears to be a major part of the district's efforts to do a good job in educating all its students. Following the demands of parents and students, the Guidance departments at both the senior and junior high schools was increased and the black members increased to 50 percent of the total. There are six counselors in the senior high, three whites and three blacks for 1,050 students. A great deal of black criticism is directed against the counselors who are accused of deliberately steering black students away from college preparatory work and college aspirations. The demand for black counselors was in part based on this belief. Blacks wanted counselors who were sympathetic and understanding of the needs of blacks, as well as ones who were without preconceived notions about the place and abilities of blacks, and felt that they could not depend upon these characteristics from whites. They specifically asked for a black female counselor to meet the needs of black girls, who are often forgotten by educators.

The district met the demands. The female counselor, however, proved to be unacceptable to the students and their families and was replaced. The black girls, however, have found that one of the male black counselors is more understanding and helpful than the female and

often find the help they need with him. Students are encouraged to change counselors if they are not satisfied by the one they have. Each counselor has a special area of expertise or background helpful to various types of students and provides a resource for other counselors. For instance, one counselor specializes in financial aid programs, another in vocational education, another in college placement, etc.

Two thirds of the black student graduates went on to college, almost 70 percent going to 4-year colleges. Many parents complain that black students are urged to attend local and community colleges and not to aim as high as whites. We have no figures on the precise destination of these students. We do know that there are several blacks from Westbury currently at Yale, Harvard and Radcliffe. One black youth turned down offers in 1970 from four Ivy league colleges, including Yale and Harvard, to accept an offer from MIT. It is true that the top black students from almost any school district on Long Island will be sought after by prestige colleges. The guidance counselor merely steers him toward applying. As one educated black parent said, the middle class black child with educated parents needs little from the school that isn't already available to whites. It is the disadvantaged black who needs help.

The guidance department thinks it is giving that help. The head of the department, a white man and an ex-athletic coach and teacher, said the school could get anyone in the school into a college if he decided he wanted to go. Great pains are taken to fit student to school. Some black athletes receive offers of acceptance and aid from as many as 25 colleges. The department asks such questions about the schools

as: 1) financial aid available; 2) general attitude of students and local community toward blacks; 3) can a black remain independent of black group pressure if he wishes?; 4) will special support be available if needed?

Guidance is, according to this man, a tricky business and a whipping boy for disappointments, but this does not relieve the department of giving the best to all students. One problem the department has is the existence of a wide gap between the two major groups of blacks in the school, the "haves" and the "have nots." The college board scores of these two groups go from around 700 for the first group and 300 and below for the second. Obviously, most students, black or white, fall between these extremes and from our interviews it appears it is the parents of the in-betweens who are unhappy. At any rate, the guidance department depends on the school program to help the low extremes and a special class in college board preparation is being prepared for slow learners.

The guidance department has a special admissions program under the direction of a black counselor. He attempts to find colleges for students of potential who have not done well enough to be admitted under regular admission policies. He has the dual problem of finding both financial and remedial or tutorial help for these students. More and more colleges are trying to offer these. This same counselor, on his own, set up a Westbury Student Aid Fund. He has collected voluntary donations to help needy students with some of the incidental costs of college admittance most whites think of as minor, as well as to help with other needs of students. For example, some students cannot afford

college application fees. Others have personal family needs. The students are told the money is a loan to be repaid whenever they can. The First National City Bank contributes its banking services free of charge. The major problem encountered has been getting people to contribute.

The guidance department provides assistance to students who want to be in special work programs and other vocational education opportunities. Most of these students are blacks, and the men in charge of the activity are black. Many blacks look upon vocational education and work-study programs as a means of keeping blacks down and placating them. The school is working to overcome this attitude. There are also blacks who are not interested in college. The department attempts to keep these students from dropping out and from going on to dead-end work, by providing work opportunities and training. Some parents object to the emphasis placed on work vs. college in individual cases, and others feel all students should be directed toward college. The vocational route is viewed as a reflection of the school's attitude toward blacks.

The guidance department seems to be well thought of by lost students. It is an active place with students informally coming and going. Counselors and students alike seem to feel the chief function of the department is to serve the academic and personal needs of students. One student interviewed expressed the view, however, that the department wouldn't let students do what they wanted. There is little personal counseling, per se, but rather provision is made for making students feel they can come for any reason they want and someone will

listen. The department seems to be committed to listening to students. Perhaps some students have not gotten the message, however. Black students were described as more vocal in their criticisms and demands than whites, but that the two groups had similar feelings. Whites have learned how to get what they want in other ways; blacks feel they must unite and make demands. The guidance department helps channel feelings into constructive effort.

It is clear that as important as black personnel may be in schools with many black students, the personality and commitment of these blacks are of vital importance. Westbury seems to have done a particularly effective job in placing effective, personable, dedicated blacks in key positions. Although charges of "Uncle Tom" were occasionally heard, for the most part blacks in the high school and the guidance department in particular have been able to communicate their support of black wishes and needs without losing effectiveness with whites.

3. Other Programs

Unfortunately, we do not have information about many other programs that may be available at the high school. Repeated efforts to meet with the school's principal and assistant principal were unsuccessful. This may have been because the time we were in Westbury was late spring, when school personnel are particularly busy. In our interviews, we met with mixed reactions towards the principal and his efforts. Many interviewees felt he was very well suited for the job. He was described as particularly effective with and acceptable to students. As a former physical education teacher he was thought to have a good rapport with boys. Some people, however, felt he is unbending in his commitment to

integration, while part of the school's black population does not want integration and act out their hostilities against those that do. These people felt he should be neutral and help students work out disagreements. Since we were unable to interview him, we cannot say what his position is. Certainly the position of the district and the administration as a whole is a commitment to integration.

The school has both curriculum and discipline committees on which students serve. The arrangement was described as working effectively. The black Dean of Students acts less in the traditional pattern of disciplinarian and more as ombudsman for students, blacks in particular, since they seem to feel more need. The school also employs a team approach to individual problems and feels it does so effectively. The team, as at the junior high, consists, in part, of psychologist, social workers, nurses, counselors, and the principal.

The general atmosphere of the school appears, to the visitor, to be friendly and relaxed. That there are problems we know from reports of past events and from the dissatisfactions voiced. The school was described to us as one that formerly had a reputation as a "country club," drawing young people from other areas looking for a good time. Students with cars had absolute freedom to come and go. Those without cars, meaning most blacks, were effectively campused, because of the school's location. After the disorders, new rules were instituted in an effort to make privileges more equitable and to change the school's reputation. Some students described the school as more like a college than a high school, with students accepting responsibility along with freedom. Others seemed to feel there was too much freedom and that it was abused. It is impossible to categorize student feelings in the

absence of a larger sampling than we were able to make.

We were repeatedly told of hostility between middle-class black students and so-called "corn b'eaders." Again it is impossible to know how widespread it is. The same is true of drug use. Students told us that ostracism of drug takers effectively kept use of drugs down. As we have seen, some adults in a position to observe students feel it is widespread. This is an area of confusion, compounded by the misunderstanding of terms, by rumors, and by fear. We are not prepared to state a conclusion.

OUTSIDE ORGANIZATIONS AND THE SCHOOLS

We have discussed the important Black Mothers' Group, but there are others in the community concerned with education. One is the Community Task Force, set up after the 1969 demands of blacks. It is made up of representatives of various factions in the district. School personnel are not official members, but the school Superintendent and other school personnel are invited to attend all meetings and school representatives are asked to report to the group on various aspects of the school program. The Task Force was described in glowing terms by many and derided as a farce by others. Most people seemed to agree that the group does its most effective work when a specific problem arose. The black members were described as particularly unwilling to meet for general discussions, which they find unproductive and time-wasting.

A very important force in the community is the Youth Center located in New Cassel. It has had a checkered history and has been the object of both hope and hostility. Apparently there have been

ideological differences among blacks who at one time or another have been in charge of the programs there. The center is currently under the direction of the County Department of Parks and Recreation. It provides courses in black studies and remediation, as well as recreation facilities, because its leadership feels the schools have not done a good job in these areas. Some blacks claim it now serves only militant purposes and that middle class youths will not attend. It is an example of some of the misunderstanding and hostility which exist among blacks and which hinder their effectiveness.

CORE and the NAACP are community groups, but they, too, are described as involved in rivalries and misunderstandings, and both given more to rhetoric than to action. There has been some intimidation of blacks active in community organizations. One black, a very articulate and dedicated man, told us of bombings and arson at his home. He assumed whites did it. The harassment followed a talk at a school board meeting at which he had demanded recognition of black needs if peace was to return to the schools.

The Westbury Community Council is an organization, funded by the county, which provides services to indigent community residents. These services are extremely varied, but the one of most direct importance to the schools is that of finding housing for poor people. The group is currently trying to get black families into a housing project outside the district which has successfully kept blacks out, though whites have no difficulty getting in. The school district involved was described as not wanting the problems of blacks. Opening up of this project to blacks would provide better housing for blacks and would

spread the black population into other areas of Nassau. Blacks from Westbury would probably not want to move out of their school district. However, it would cut down on overcrowding of welfare families in New Cassel. Roosevelt officials hope this housing will open up to blacks also.

Westbury is a community at the crossroads. It is a town with a receptivity to blacks not found in many places. That the school district failed to recognize the needs of poorer black families as they moved into the district is undoubtedly true. It is equally true that every effort was made to comply with the ideals of integration in the schools. Efforts in that direction probably turned officials' attention away from curriculum revision and personnel needs. Accusations that the district acted only when demands were met is true to an extent, but ignores the efforts that were nevertheless being made.

Whatever past mistakes it may have made, Westbury seems now to be committed to helping the disadvantaged black child. It is hampered in its efforts in this direction primarily by the newness of the problems. It also faces rising opposition on the part of taxpayers whose children are not in need of special, innovative programs, and who are unable to see ways that new directions in public education may benefit all children once the effects of past social mistakes are remediated. The district seems to act without an apparent master plan, which gives rise to accusations of insincerity.

Much of what happens in the next few years depends on influences beyond Westbury. Such areas as welfare, state aid, and federal housing policies will have profound effects on Westbury.

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