FRANKLIN FAMILY FOUNDATION



AND THE WESTBROOK REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

**General Instructions**

**Westbrook (October 15)** -- The public meeting of the Westbrook Regional School Board was packed with angry parents tonight, one day after the release of the State Department of Education's report on the gap between the science education of whites and minority students. According to the report, "Bridging the Gap," Westbrook had the largest disparity between races, as measured by three primary criteria: the percentage of minority versus white students enrolled in advanced science and mathematics courses, minority and white median SAT II test scores in math and science subjects, and the percentage of minority versus white students planning to pursue technical careers.

The results did not surprise students at Westbrook High School. "I have always heard Westbrook called this great, diverse place, you know? But, like, there isn't a single minority student in any of my classes," said Jane Kellerman, who describes herself as "plain white." "I'm not surprised," said Jerome Brown, an African-American. "My advisor told me which classes I should take and advanced sciences never really came up, which was fine with me." Many other minority students reported having similar discussions with their advisors, saying that while they were never explicitly told to stay away from the advanced science and math courses, they were never encouraged to give them a try.

Lynda Johnson, president of the Michigan chapter of African-American Leaders, and mother of three students at Westbrook High School, derided the Board and superintendent for their lax attitude toward racial equality in Westbrook. "There seems to be a feeling among the Board and the Administration that diversity in the student body automatically leads to equality in the classroom. This report shows that for what it is: a myth. The Board continues to hire WASP teachers and administrators, and then they wonder where results like this come from."

Kyle Whitberg, president of the Parent Teacher Association, however, added a note of caution. "Both of my daughters graduated from Westbrook High, taking every science course they could get their hands on, and both are now pursuing technical degrees in college. I think we need to be aware that this is an issue for our community, but it is not fair to lay it at the feet of the school board. Parents need to be active in their children’s curriculum choices. To expect 16-year-olds

to decide for themselves seems unrealistic."

Board President Martin O'Leary closed the meeting after four hours, saying the Board would be investigating possible ways of handling the problem and that they welcomed input from the community.

**Westbrook (October 22)** -- Superintendent Julia Statner reported at the opening of tonight's meeting that she had approached the Franklin Family Foundation and that it had agreed to provide multi-year funding for an afterschool tutoring program. The program, for minority students at the high school, would be staffed by Westbrook faculty as a means of addressing the gap between minorities and whites in science and math. Ms. Statner indicated that the Foundation would support the program "at a level that would make a difference."

"We feel that this partnership with the school district can make real strides toward ameliorating the situation," said Franklin Foundation Executive Director Thomas F. Leighton.

"The Franklin family has a long-standing relationship with Westbrook, and again they have stepped forward to show their support and help us to build a stronger community," explained Statner.

The plan, however, received mixed reactions. While some parents offered lukewarm applause, many more stepped forward to voice their concern over what they felt was an ill-conceived, and poorly thought-out solution.

"What does this address? You still have no minority role models in the school system and now you have reinforced the students’ feelings of inferiority," remarked Lynda Johnson. "The Franklins may think they have all they answers, but their kids don't even go to the public schools here anymore."

"I don't know that this is the best use of faculty time. The teachers are overburdened as it is. How can they take on this, too, even if the ones who volunteer are compensated? Has anyone asked the faculty how they feel about this?" said PTA President Kyle Whitberg.

Board members were not unanimously supportive of the move. Though Board President Martin O'Leary commended Ms. Statner for her quick action and obvious commitment to equality, he cautioned that more time and investigation would be needed before the District could commit to a single course of action. Board member Ruth Simone did little to hide her irritation. "I am dismayed that Ms. Statner has proceeded without consulting the Board. I hope the Franklins understand that the District does not consider itself wedded to this program just because they shook hands on it."

The Franklin Family Foundation has assets of slightly more than $1 million and made grants last year totaling just over $100,000. Most of the grants were in the $5,000 to $7,500 range, although both Superintendent Statner and Executive Director Leighton talked about a much more substantial grant. The grant would be used to compensate teachers (modestly) for their time after school hours, to cover the cost of a teacher coordinator for the tutoring program, and to help cover operating costs (e.g., keeping the school building open, laboratory materials and supplies, and books).

**Logistics and Objectives:**

There will be two rounds of meetings in this game. The first round involves two simultaneous meetings -- one that includes the Board of Directors of the Franklin Family Foundation and their executive director and the other that includes the president of the Board of Education, school officials, and some community representatives. These take place just a few days after the October 22 meeting at which the tutoring program was tentatively announced.

The Foundation meeting is chaired by Ms. Ellen Rigby Franklin, Chair of the Board of Directors of the Franklin Family Foundation. The Board is meeting to discuss a course of action for the Westbrook School District grant, in light of the opposition to the Foundation’s initial plan. The Board will try to clarify its position on the grant, including how the money will be spent, by the close of the 45-minute meeting. All decisions of the Foundation must be agreed upon by at least three of the five directors present (the executive director of the Foundation does not vote).

The community meeting was called by the president of the Westbrook Board of Education to discuss with some community representatives and school officials possible alternatives to the tutoring program. The members of the Board of Education have agreed to keep this meeting informal and closed so that invited community members may openly and honestly voice their concerns. Furthermore, the Board has only agreed to commit to a position if at least five of the six representatives present at this meeting are in agreement. The meeting will be chaired by Martin O’Leary, president of the Board.

These two meetings will be followed by a joint session at which both groups will meet (at the request of the Foundation) to see if they can hammer out a joint public statement. There will be 40 minutes allocated for this second meeting. Prior to the beginning of the second meeting, both groups should think about how they want to present the results of their first round of meetings.

Both meetings take place on October 25. They will each last 40 minutes.

**At the Foundation meeting:**

**Ellen Rigby Franklin, Chairman of the Board.** Ms. Ellen (as she is known) created the Foundation in memory of her late husband almost 25 years ago. She has chaired the Board since its founding, and only at considerable prodding did she agree to create seats on the Board for community members. She is well aware of the fact that it will soon be time for her to hand over the reins of the Foundation to one of her relatives.

**Thomas F. Leighton, Executive Director.** The nephew of the matriarch of the family, he grew up out of state. He has a Bachelor’s of Education and a Master’s of Business Administration, and has been working for the family for just over one year.

**Stephen J. Franklin, III, Board Member.** Son of Ellen and Stephen Franklin, Jr. Managed the day-to- day affairs of the Foundation until it became too time-consuming. He was the one who suggested they hire a full-time director. He is still chairs the Franklin-Westbrook Medical Center and Franklin College Boards, and someday hopes to take over from his mother as head of the family Foundation.

**Nancy Franklin Michaels, Ph.D., Board Member.** Daughter of Ellen and Stephen Franklin, Jr. Professor of European History at Franklin College. World-renowned scholar on 15th century English social structure. She assumes she will be the next head of the Franklin Family Foundation.

**Kevin Macloud, Board Member.** African-American attorney. Partner in Williams, Weisman and Macloud, which handles the legal work for all of the Franklin family ventures. Former chapter president of African-American Leaders.

**Dr. Suzanne Lowe, Board Member.** Chief of Staff at Franklin-Westbrook Medical Center. Has two children in the school system.

**At the School Board meeting:**

**Martin O'Leary, Board President.** Two years into his fourth three-year term. Has previously served as the Chair of the Finance committee and of the Ad Hoc committee on Affirmative Action for the School Board.

**Ruth Simone, Board Member.** Two years into first three-year term. Very reform minded, settled for being head of the Board contracts team. Was voted down for president of the Board earlier this year.

**Julia Statner, Superintendent of Schools.** Hired four years ago as Westbrook's first female superintendent. Master’s degree in Chemistry, Ph.D. in school administration. Taught for 12 years before becoming an administrator.

**Kyle Whitberg, President of PTA.** A cancer researcher at Franklin-Westbrook Medical Center. Mr. Whitberg is white and his wife Ann is African-American.

**Lynda Johnson, President of African-American Leaders.** Worked her way up from being a waitperson to owning a chain of restaurants in the greater Westbrook area. Single parent of four, three of whom are high school age. Very forceful on racial issues in the community.

**John Rayburn, President of Westbrook NEA.** Newly elected union president, chosen in part for his stand on no mandatory increase in workload for teachers.

**Westbrook, Michigan A Profile**

Westbrook is a suburb of Detroit, about an hour and a half from the city center. The village was founded in 1846, when the area was still largely agricultural, and owners of the local farms decided that a central market would benefit them all. A thriving commercial district grew up in the town center, but as industry drew the population into the urban core, many of the businesses floundered. Franklin College was founded in 1921 by Stephen J. Franklin, who grew up in Westbrook before leaving to found his iron works in the city. The college now makes up a majority of the picturesque downtown. It is a small liberal arts college of about 1,500 undergraduates and 100 graduate students. It is a well-respected school, though the majority of its students come from the surrounding area. Franklin College is best known for its Department of Education, which began a teaching high school approximately six years ago and now enrolls 200 students.

This is not, however, the majority of the pupils in Westbrook today. With the invention of the automobile, the distance from the city to Westbrook has been greatly diminished. Furthermore, since the fall of the automotive super powers and the flight from Detroit proper, the distance to the real commercially viable "Detroit" area is now a matter of minutes. Westbrook is now an attractive, rural suburb, with a population of 55,216. The median income for the town is more than $40,000 and house prices run well into six digits. Residents of Westbrook tend to have at least a college diploma, if not an advanced degree. A significant number of medical professionals have recently moved into the area. This is largely due to the creation of Franklin- Westbrook Medical Center 14 years ago, which is now the town's largest employer.

Despite its obviously upper- to upper-middle class tendencies, Westbrook is a fairly racially and ethnically diverse community. The university and medical center attract researchers from around the world, creating an international community that makes up 15 percent of the town. Of the U.S. citizens who reside in Westbrook, approximately 55 percent are white, 23 percent are Asian, 14 percent are African-American and seven percent are Hispanic. The minorities in Westbrook tend to be middle-class professionals, both at the Medical Center and with other organizations.

Most families in Westbrook send their children to the public schools in town, and they demand a very high level of quality and of accountability. School Board seats are more hotly contested that Town Council ones, and the public meetings held are much better attended. There are a few private schools in the area, including Franklin Prep at the College, but tuition tends to be very steep ($18,000 or more per year), and residents feel that the town should be able to provide a high-quality education for their tax dollars.

Residents with school-aged children are focused on the quality of the education, while the cost tends to be the focus for others. Of late, like much of the rest of the country, Westbrook has seen

significant growth in its elderly population, which has led to growing concern about the amount of money being spent on the schools versus other public services and amenities.

All in all, however, Westbrook is a place where people want to live and work. It is a community its residents care deeply about and a town with a great deal of educational and economic prominence in the region.

**SUMMARY STATISTICS ON WESTBROOK REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT FROM THE BRIDGING THE GAP STUDY**

Percentage of students by race who have completed AP Math or Science courses by the end of their fourth year in the high school.

**1994 AP Calculus AP Biology AP**

**Chemistry**

**AP Physics**

**Asian** 74% 54% 66% 35%

**Black** 22% 25% 19% 9%

**Hispanic** 31% 27% 23% 11%

**White** 68% 49% 56% 31%

Mean SAT II scores by race, 1989-1995.

**Math I SAT II**

**1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 Compared to White**

**Asian** 518 514 510 511 509 513 513 +1.06%

**Black** 356 360 357 358 354 356 358 -29.1%

**Hispanic** 440 436 436 432 430 432 428 -15.2%

**White** 495 498 500 501 502 504 505 N/A

**Math II SAT II**

**1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 Compared to White**

**Asian** 545 548 550 547 552 550 553 +3.94%

**Black** 354 355 354 356 357 358 360 -32.3%

**Hispanic** 390 394 391 392 394 395 398 -25.2%

**White** 524 525 528 526 527 530 532 N/A

**Chemistry SAT II**

**1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 Compared to White**

**Asian** 523 525 525 526 528 531 530 +2.11%

**Black** 340 344 345 347 348 349 352 -32.2%

**Hispanic** 414 415 417 416 418 419 421 -18.9%

**White** 516 515 513 514 517 518 519 N/A

**Physics SAT II**

**1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 Compared to White**

**Asian** 516 512 513 511 510 512 514 +1.18%

**Black** 348 352 347 346 348 350 351 -30.9%

**Hispanic** 420 418 419 419 415 414 412 -18.9%

**White** 506 505 507 504 503 505 508 N/A

**Biology SAT II**

**1989 1990 1991 1992 1993 1994 1995 Compared to White**

**Asian** 519 521 518 522 523 524 527 +3.13%

**Black** 352 353 356 358 357 360 361 -29.4%

**Hispanic** 404 406 405 408 410 411 414 -19.0%

**White** 509 507 510 511 512 512 511 N/A

Percentage of students by race planning on pursuing a career or advanced education in science, engineering, or medicine upon graduation.

**1991 1992 1993 1994 1995**

**Asian** 25.2 24.9 25.5 25.9 26.3

**Black** 3.2 2.9 3.6 4.7 3.5

**Hispanic** 8.4 6.7 6.9 7.4 7.8

**White** 16.2 17.5 16.3 17.8 18.5

**Preparing for Round I Negotiations WORKSHEET**

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As you read through the General Instructions and your Confidential Instructions try to keep tabs on the following:

1. **INTERESTS**

What are your interests? What are the interests of the key parties on the other side? Who are your allies likely to be? Who is likely to oppose what you want? Why?

1. **OPTIONS**

What alternative policies or programs can you suggest that will meet your interests as well as the interests of those who are likely to disagree with you?

1. **ARGUMENTS**

What arguments can you make for the program or policies you like best? What criteria are most important in constructing these arguments?

1. **OUTCOME IF THERE IS NO AGREEMENT**

If there is no agreement at the meeting, what is most likely to happen with regard to the proposed grant? Who will gain and who will lose if this is the case?

1. **INTERPERSONAL PROBLEMS**

What interpersonal problems are likely to arise at the meeting? How are you going to handle these?