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Documentation plan for the Metropolitan Council for Economic Opportunity (METCO)

Maria Estorino Northeastern University - University Libraries

Joan D. Krizack
Northeastern University

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NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES ARCHIVES AND SPECIAL COLLECTIONS DEPARTMENT

DOCUMENTATION PLAN Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity (METCO)

I. ANALYSIS

Institutional Analysis

History and Culture

In 1963 a group of African American parents and community leaders began organizing to address the poor quality of education for black students in the city of Boston. Their efforts led to the passage of the Massachusetts Racial Imbalance Law in 1965, the same year that Black parents began Operation Exodus. This program bused more the 400 students daily from overcrowded Boston schools to under-enrolled suburban schools. The Massachusetts Federation for Fair Housing and Equal Rights took an interest in urban-suburban educational cooperation, and in November 1965 it sponsored a meeting of more than 12 suburban school districts to explore the further development of such a program in November 1965. This meeting led to several others, and in December 1965, representatives of suburban school districts outlined the basic program that became METCO in 1966, a voluntary desegregation program that enrolls participating students in suburban school districts as well as a service-delivery agency that provides support services to METCO students and their families. METCO, Inc. is contracted by the Massachusetts Department of Education as the service provider for the METCO program.

With funding from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and with the participation of seven suburban school districts, METCO appointed its Board of Directors and central office staff in May 1966, with Dr. Joseph Killory as executive director. On September 6, 1966, 220 METCO students took their first bus ride to schools in seven suburban districts. Today (2000), METCO places over 3,000 students in 32 suburban school districts. Ruth Batson became the director of METCO in 1967 and served as such until 1970, when she was succeeded by Robert Hayden. In 1973, Jean M. McGuire became executive director, a position which she continues to serve in today. The following year, METCO, Inc. opened new offices at 40 Dimock Street in Roxbury, Massachusetts.

Mission and Functions

□Our mission is to provide, through professional leadership and voluntary citizen action, the development and promotion of quality integrated educational opportunities for urban and suburban students in the Greater Boston community and to work towards the expansion of a collaborative education program with the Boston and suburban school systems. □

METCO performs five basic functions:

1. Administration and Public Information Services
This includes governance, policy development and implementation, fiscal operations,

payroll and employee benefits programs, facilities care, information systems management, contracting, and legislative relations. METCO disseminates information to the public via the Internet, newspapers, radio, television, and newsletters to highlight the achievements and contributions of METCO students and of the program. It also keeps records on the historical and statistical accomplishments of the METCO program. As required by the Massachusetts Department of Education, METCO compiles student and program data. METCO also publishes legislative alerts to keep the community informed of pertinent educational issues.

2. Student Intake and Placement

METCO recruits and registers minority families for the METCO program. It hosts annual informational meetings, workshops, and newsletters for parents and conducts a continuation process for students on the METCO waiting list. The agency is also responsible for keeping active files on all students, including those on the waiting list and those who have graduated from the program. METCO develops and establishes placement policies and procedures and coordinates referrals with the METCO Districts. It also prepares periodic and annual reports on referrals and placement of students.

3. Student and Family Support Services

METCO provides academic and linguistic tutoring for students referred by Districts or their parents. The agency coordinates an elementary summer school for incoming and present students requiring remedial support. It also provides individual, group, and family counseling services for parents and students. METCO provides support to parents through group meetings and the Parents Council, and provides support documentation such as the Parent Handbook, and district manuals.

4. School District Support Services

METCO, Inc. serves as a clearinghouse and coordinator of staff development programs for the school districts. Staff participates on screening teams to hire METCO Directors. The agency is also a resource center for the Districts for multicultural educational curriculum materials, practices, and resources. METCO also coordinates meetings of the METCO Directors and METCO Superintendents.

5. Transportation Services

The agency manages transportation services for 13 METCO Districts and is available for technical assistance to non-contract towns. It also provides training for METCO Directors, bus monitors, and bus drivers on safety practices and procedures.

METCO carries out these functions through several organizational units:

The **Business Manager** is the fiscal agent of METCO, Inc. and is responsible for financial reports, personnel files, grants and contracts fulfillment, budgets, audits, and legal documents (such as 990) and manages the fiscal systems and daily accounting functions of the agency, including payroll. The Business Manager also maintains current employee personnel records.

☐ The goal of the **Data Center** is to maintain an accurate data base and also to utilize the computer operations in ways which maximize the efficiency of the total agency operation. ☐ The Data Center maintains active, pending, and graduate student records and keeps the METCO waiting list. It manages the annual school audit and the continuation process. In addition the Data Center maintains the agency ☐s computer network.

The **Placement Department** coordinates student selection and placement in METCO schools. It does this by verifying eligibility, collecting assessment materials, handling requests for referrals from districts, recruiting potential referrals, and insures affirmative action mandate in making referrals. The Placement Department also provides orientation for students and develops placement information packets. It maintains all documentation for the student selection and placement process, including student files and interview records, as well as METCO yearbooks.

Student Services provides direct services to METCO students to support their academic and social needs. Services include crisis intervention and preventive action, district academic and behavioral contracts, and the required exit hearings. The main services provided by this department include counseling services (family, group, individual, crisis intervention, and drug and alcohol abuse prevention); academic assistance (tutoring, SAT and ISEE preparation, elementary summer school, and student workshops); and guidance (FAF assistance, admissions counseling, scholarship funding information). It also oversees the METCO summer school and parent education program.

The Evening Manager also oversees **Parent Services**. In addition to monitoring the operations and facilities of METCO, Inc. during evening and weekend hours of operation, the Evening Manager/Parent Services develops the annual calendar for parent, Board, and other meetings and acts as parent coordinator.

Through its **Transportation Department**, METCO manages the transportation program of 13 contracted districts. It handles transportation issues for all METCO districts and provides technical assistance for non-managed districts. Any district can request the Transportation Department's assistance in developing routes and handling bids. The department also enforces disciplinary and safety standards.

METCO s departments are overseen by the **Associate Director**. He is responsible for the administration of METCO, Inc. s operations and supervision of its departments and staff. The Associate Director coordinates researchers and interns and acts as METCO, Inc. s representative to METCO Directors. He is responsible for budget preparation, fiscal control, contracting, legislative relations, and personnel policies. The Associate Director reports to the Executive Director and acts as her chief advisor regarding all program matters.

The **Executive Director** is the Chief Executive Officer responsible for the administration, development, growth, and maintenance of METCO, Inc. She is primarily involved in administrative policy development and acts as METCO liaison to government and other organizations. The Executive Director is also active in curriculum development. She is

assisted by the Executive Secretary/Public Relations Coordinator and reports to the Board of Directors.

The Executive Secretary/Public Relations Coordinator assists the Executive and Associate Directors in their functions and in their record keeping and coordinates clerical support for the agency as a whole. She is also responsible for METCO public relations including the METCO newsletter, news clippings, flyers and other publicity materials, press releases, legislative alerts, and the parent handbook. The Executive Secretary/Public Relations Coordinator maintains alumni relations records and duplicates of the Executive Director scorrespondence. She assists the Executive Director in documenting the METCO program and maintaining clippings archives.

The **Board of Directors** oversees the Executive Director and the METCO program. It is fiscally and legally responsible for the METCO program. The Board maintains METCO\[]s articles of incorporation and by-laws and reviews the agency\[]s annual reports. It develops personnel policies. The Scholarship Committee reviews and awards scholarships to qualified applicants. These scholarships of \$400 to \$600 help graduating seniors cover the cost of books when they begin their college educations.

Another component of METCO is the **Parents Council** which is currently limited to dealing with flash-point issues on a small scale. The Parents Council helped parents obtain power on the METCO board and worked to get parents elected to school committees. It was involved in scholarship and other fund-raising efforts and coordinated activities for students and families, including host families.

Control of Institution

METCO, Inc. is an independent, non-profit 501 (c) (3) organization with an annual budget of a little over \$900,000. It is overseen by a Board of Directors and is funded entirely by the Massachusetts Department of Education (DOE) through a contractual relationship that is reviewed annually. Through its contract with the DOE, METCO, Inc. provides services to students in the program and the METCO districts, the latter of which receive grants from the DOE to support their METCO programs. METCO, Inc. regularly reports to the DOE on the status of its contract fulfillment.

Interaction with Other Institutions

METCO maintains active relationships with various Boston-area organizations. It works closely with the Boston Public Schools (BPS) in sharing student records and information as necessary and in order to secure services for METCO students who return to the BPS system. METCO also works with private, parochial, and charter schools, which are often educational alternatives for students not placed in the METCO program.

METCO collaborates with area colleges and universities for special programs, internships at METCO, and admissions recruitment. College students serve as tutors for the Student Services department. METCO maintains a particularly strong relationship with Wheelock College, which provides student teachers for the METCO summer school.

METCO, Inc. has constant contact with the suburban METCO programs through the monthly METCO Directors meetings and the tri-annual METCO Superintendents meetings, both coordinated by the Boston office. At the Directors meetings, area educational agencies provide information about their services, such as before- and after-school programs. Other agencies with which METCO has interacted include Urban League, Youth Build, local churches, and the Massachusetts Division of Transitional Assistance.

COMPARISON WITH OTHER INSTITUTIONS OF SAME TYPE

METCO is one of three Voluntary Integration Programs (VIPs) in the Northeast. In Hartford, Connecticut is Project Choice, previously known as Project Concern, and Rochester, New York is home to the Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program.

Project Choice in Hartford is a reformulation of the former voluntary integration program, Project Concern. The latter began in 1966 when 266 students from predominantly African-American schools in Hartford were randomly selected to be transferred to five suburban school districts. It operated as a voluntary integration program that allowed low-income students from Hartford schools to attend public schools in the suburbs. In 1997 Project Concern was transformed into a school choice program run by the state school system and known as Project Choice, the Hartford Area Choice Program, or Open Choice. It is estimated that 1,800 students out of more than 500,000 will participate in Project Choice in 2000-2001.

The Urban-Suburban Interdistrict Transfer Program is a state-run agency which began in 1965 as a cooperative desegregation effort between the Rochester school district and the Irondequoit district. The program transferred minority students from Rochester to suburban schools and encouraged suburban students to transfer to Rochester schools. After two failed attempts, in 1998 the parents of a 10-year-old white student successfully applied for their daughter to be transferred to a school in the suburbs. When the program director learned that the student was white, the parents were notified that their daughter was ineligible because she was not a minority, and they filed suit against the West Irondequoit Central School District claiming discrimination. The Rochester Urban Suburban Interdistrict Transfer program has stopped placing new students while it fights this lawsuit.

Springfield, Massachusetts also operates a METCO program. It is run by the Springfield Public Schools and serves a smaller number of students than METCO, Inc. in Boston.

METCO is similar to these other programs in mission but not in structure or operation. It is unique in that it is a non-profit organization with a Board of Directors. Unlike similar agencies in Springfield, Hartford, and Rochester, METCO, Inc. is a DOE contractor but is not operated by that department, nor is it a state agency. This has afforded METCO a measure of independence not available to other programs of its kind that are run by governmental agencies, and it makes METCO ultimately responsible to the constituency it serves. In addition METCOLs clientele is larger than that of the other northeastern programs, with over 3,000 Boston students placed by METCO in 32 suburban school districts.

II. SELECTION

All of the functions of METCO will be fully documented. Selection of records will also take into consideration the administrative and legal needs of the organizations and the records value for research. All but the most routine records will be preserved because of the unique nature of the METCO program. The academic, discipline, and other personal records of METCO students or personal records of METCO employees will only be available for research with the written consent of METCO.

DOCUMENTATION GOALS

The selected METCO records will document:

- 1. A community response to an unmet need.
- 2. Urban-suburban relations through integration efforts.
- 3. The impact of a voluntary integration program on students, educational systems, and the community at large.
- 4. The development and administration of a community service and advocacy organization.

SERIES

Board of Directors

- Minutes
- Legal files
- By-laws
- Articles of incorporation
- Annual reports
- Retreat files
- Organizational charts

Executive Director

- Policy development files
- Correspondence
- Conferences
- Reports
- Program referrals
- Fund-raising files
- External relations
- Curriculum development

Associate Director

- Reports to board
- Long-range planning files
- Grant files
- Legislative materials

- Researchers and interns records
- METCO Directors minutes
- METCO Superintendents minutes

Executive Secretary/Public Relations

- Newspaper clipping files
- Town files (METCO activities in towns)
- Alumni relations records
- Curriculum handbooks (for parents)
- Legislative alerts
- Town meeting minutes

Business Manager

- Financial reports (annual)
- Grant and contract files (if different from Assoc. Director's grant files)
- Budgets
- Audits (annual)
- Legal documents (e.g., 990)

Data Center

- Student records (restricted)
- Alumni records
- Continuation forms (restricted)
- Active books (restricted)
- Waiting list books (restricted)

Placement Department

- Student files, including summer school (restricted
- Correspondence
- Selection process documentation (restricted)
- Placement packets
- Yearbooks

Student Services

- Tutorial files (restricted)
- Counseling records (restricted)
- Test preparation material
- Summer school reports (restricted)
- Reports to State Board of Education and other reports

Parents Council and Parent Services

- Minutes
- Fund-raising files
- Activities for students, families, and host families

Transportation Department

- Bus routes
- Contracts
- Discipline records (restricted)

Prepared by María R. Estorino, 25 July 2000. Revised by Joan D. Krizack, 23 October 2000