

## City of Detroit

VB16 Ford

## INTER-OFFICE CORRESPONDENCE

TO: Fred Linsell

DATE September 26, 1971

FROM: Mary L. Johnson

SUBJECT: Ford High School Parents Meeting

Prior to the eruption of violence last Wednesday. Ford High School had been divided by various points of view plus factions in the Board of Education vs. the Administration (downtown), the Administration (downtown) vs. Principal and teachers at Ford, Black students vs. white students (backed by parents determined to keep blacks out of area). There is a black assistant principal, Cleon Gilliam who is not relating to black students. He appears to be afraid to relate (according to parents). The athletic departments allegedly does not want black to participate in sports. The students had divided the lavatories into separate "Black" and "White" lavatories. If a black went into the "white lavatory" he would be beaten. The same happened to a white if he wandered into the "Black lavatory." There is also a problem of failure or flunking out at Ford's of many black males. (a greater percentage than most schools)

The sequence of events are as follows:

Wednesday--white parents, white students and white motorcycle gangs threw rocks and bottles at the Black students who arrived by bus.

Friday--white parents with dogs, motorcycle gangs, white students threw rocks and bottles at blacks. The police were called. The police did not seem to be trying to keep peace seemed to provoke more action. Action by police was mostly against blacks rather than whites who had started the disturbance. A black boy was placed in police care and let off on side where congregated, whites were.

Dr. Young interviewed both black and white students and parents. Afterwards he talked with Mr. Tannian, Mayor Gribb's assistant and Commissioner Nichols of Police Department regarding police behavior. He was promised action by both.

Sunday--Mr. Lattimore (a parent) and a few other black men met with some of the black male students. The students were very hostile and bent on revenge and retaliation for their humiliations. Mr. Lattimore feels that if the meeting had not taken place Monday would have been very bloody.

Monday--More violence erupted but was contained by the police who were stationed both inside and outside of school area. There were students, members of the Black United Front, in the area from other High Schools in the city. (to help their outnumbered black brothers). When the Black students walked