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GLOBE PHOTO/ERIK JACOBS

From kindergarten through high school, Kandice Sumner (right, with her mother, Katani) traveled from Boston to Weston for school.

Long-distance learner

After logging many miles as a Metco student, she's a documentary star

By Rhonda Stewart

GLOBE STAFF

Kandice Sumner feels as though she spent years studying abroad, and in a sense she did. A 45-minute bus ride every weekday during every school year brought her to another world. Sumner, a Metco student since kindergarten, would rise at 5 a.m. to travel from Boston to attend school in Weston, the state's wealthiest suburb.

It's not a unique story, of course, but it's one that is about to get Sumner a lot of attention. Sumner, 18, is the focus of a new documentary, "Far From Home," that follows the teenager during her last

two years at Weston High School as she prepares for college. The 40-minute film premieres tonight at the Museum of Fine Arts and shows again on Aug. 21 at the Roxbury Film Festival, where Sumner and her family will be on hand for a Q&A session after the screening.

Started in 1966, Metco — or Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunity Inc. — is the country's longest-running voluntary school desegregation program. More than 8,000 students have taken part in Metco over the past 39 years.

While Sumner is a typical teenager in many ways, she also seems insightful and

poised beyond her years. That self-assuredness comes from, as she puts it, learning to play the game at a young age. This wasn't easy, considering that the rules seemed to shift depending on the situation. When other students got A's, it was no big deal; but when she did, it surprised some people. As a top student and the first black female class president at Weston High, Sumner at times battled the notion that she was "acting white," or trying to be something she wasn't.

She says she developed a two-track mind — one track focused on her studies and the other on how she was perceived

SUMNER, Page D2