Expert Group #3: Students of Freedom Schools

NOTE: All of the following sources are primary documents from the 1964 Freedom Schools, provided by Education & Democracy, Civil Rights Movement Veterans, and the University of Southern Mississippi Digital Collections.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS ............................................................................................................. 2

STUDENT WRITINGS & EXPERIENCES

- Freedom Press (2 page excerpt) - publication of the Mt. Zion Freedom School ......................... 3
- Student Voice of True Light (2 page excerpt) - student newsletter published on July 20, 1964 ........ 5
- Examples of Student Work (various excerpts) ............................................................................. 7
- Student Voice, True Light (2 page excerpt) - student newsletter published on July 24, 1964 ......... 9

IMPACT & OUTCOMES

- Platform of the Mississippi Freedom School Convention (excerpt) .......................................... 11
- Data on Freedom Schools (3 page excerpt) ........................................................................... 13
1) Based on student writings, what do you think were the dreams and aspirations of young people in Mississippi during the summer of 1964? What did these students hope for Mississippi and the rest of the country?

2) Do you think students risked anything to attend Freedom Schools? If so, what did they risk? What were young people able to accomplish because of Freedom Schools?

3) What impact did the Freedom Schools have on young people participating? Based on student writings, what do you think young people learned from the Freedom Schools?

4) Why do you think students liked going to the Freedom Schools? What are the parallels between students in the 1964 Freedom Schools and students at your school today?

5) Students were an integral part of creating the Freedom Schools in Mississippi - can you think of movements today (locally, nationally, globally) that involve students organizing for social change?
OUR DAY OF CANVASSING

On August 6, Linda E. Victoria J., my sister Gwendolyn and I went canvassing. It was a great experience because we had never been canvassing before.

We went to many houses, we are going to tell you about some very interesting things that happened.

We went to a house on Ruby Street and this is what we said to the lady there:

"Good evening! We are canvassing for the Mt. Zion Freedom School and we would like to know if you have ever been to Freedom School."

She said, "No! And I'm not going to Freedom School."

We asked her why and she said her "religion said she cannot go. And anyway, you little children don't know what you are doing. You don't know what freedom is."

"Oh yes we do," we said, "We know more than you know."

The lady kept on saying that we didn't know what we were talking about.

THE TOWN NOBODY LOVED - LILLY

I am writing a story about a town nobody loved or liked but did nothing about. I've been living here for fifteen years so I can tell you the story.

I was a little girl in the second grade, when a terrible thing happened. There was a boy about 10 years of age and he was walking home from the store. I was walking home too, but I wasn't walking just beside him.

A little white girl came along riding her bicycle and the little colored boy stopped to look at her. The white girl stopped and said, "If you don't stop looking at me, nigger, I am going to tell my daddy that you were fighting with me."

The colored boy did not know that a colored boy was not supposed to look at a white girl and so he said, "I can look at you as long as I like."

Dear Gov. Johnson,

How are you? My name is Lynette. I am eleven years old and I am a Negro. I am going to the Mt. Zion Freedom School.

If you want to know why I am going there here are the reasons: I want to learn about my race; I want to become a part of history, I want to have the opportunity to learn here what I cannot learn in my regular school. I want to be able to vote when I am twenty-one, and I want to be a first-class citizen.

- Lynette X.

A FRIEND DROPS IN

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One of America's most famous folk singer is Pete Seeger. Last week he came to Mt. Zion to put on a special show for us.

Pete sang many songs about freedom. He said that in Africa the people have a special word for freedom. It is "le-lepo."
What The Summer Has Meant To Me

I think the summer has made a lot of changes in Mississippi.

Now we can sit down and eat at Woolworth's and Kress'.

I think the summer has made the white men see that we are not happy with Mississippi. We went to make even more changes.

I think that next summer we can get to go to more than just two places in Hattiesburg.

We should be able to go to the drive-in.

- Mattie M.

THE MEANING OF FREEDOM

Freedom Means:

1) waking up each morning and being glad you were born.

2) playing "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief" and mean it.

3) not trying to wash away the color of your skin with soap.

4) not changing your last name so people won't know what your religion is.

5) "Mr." and "Mrs."

6) "Bad" hair is really "good."

7) reading the Declaration of Independence

ONE PERSON'S PRAYER

Dear God, the Father of mankind,

Made me the way I am.

He didn't make me yellow like Judy,

He didn't make me white like Sam.

When God created you and me

He didn't favor one color, you see

Yet in this great big world of strife,

The races take each other's lives.

They hate us not for what we are,

But because of the color of our skin,

Yet deep down in their hearts they know

That Our Creator made us kin.

I am a Negro, you see,

I know that God created me

My parents were also Eve and Adam

So I don't think I'm inferior, M.D./M.

We are the parents of the world

Of every boy and girl born

So we should learn to love one another

As if child were our own.

- Mrs. Jimmie C.

THE STORY OF REV. KLUNDER

Rev. Bruce Klunder was a hero for freedom.

He believed that freedom could only be won if people worked for it every minute of the day.

One day in Cleveland he lay down behind a bulldozer to stop the building of a segregated school. The driver of the bulldozer didn't see Rev. Klunder when he backed up the machine. Rev. Klunder was killed immediately.

If we want to have our freedom we must remember what other people have sacrificed and try harder ourselves.

- Anthony H.

LOOKING BACK

What has the summer project accomplished? I think it has started more colored people registering to vote when they had tried before. It was also an experience because white people came to live with Negroes. Kress' and Woolworth's also opened up their lunch counters.

I thought that when COFO came to set up its project it would lead to trouble, even though it wasn't their purpose. Maybe the reason why there wasn't any trouble was because the people who didn't like COFO thought it wasn't doing enough to get them aroused.

I would like people...
This I Have Learned in Freedom School

I have learned most of all that the Negro is really just as superior as another race. If the Negro has a good education, he can make as big a success as any man from another race.

I also learned that a Negro was the first to give up his life for American freedom, and from then on the Negro has been giving up his life for the American cause.

The Negro isn't really free until he knows and acts like he's free. Just because the Civil Rights Bill has been passed doesn't mean he's free.

Freedom for the Negroes isn't just the right to eat where another race eats or go where another race goes but to be able to learn the same things that another race learns and be able to express themselves the way they want without being afraid of what might happen to them.

---Sandra Jo-Ann O., age 16

A Story of Mexico

Once there was a family who lived in Mexico. They stayed in the valley. There was a volcano over the hill which the family did not know was there.

The volcano exploded. All the people saw the great fires of the volcano. Then the people started to run. The volcano cooled down.

The family was found dead in their house. A girl and a boy and the mother and father were found.

---Sandra K., age 11

What I Think About Hattiesburg

Hattiesburg is an unfit place to live because of the people that make up this town. The whites have their way. If they kill one of us they get away with it, but if we kill one of them they kill us. What are we going to do about this? Nothing but take our stand for our equal rights.

---Shirley White, age 14

An Interview

July 15 I interviewed a student. This student has been to both Woolworth's and Kress's. She says, "I wasn't really hungry, but I went because I wanted to prove to the whites that I could eat in public places just as they could." While she was eating a small group of whites walked out. A crowd of people was watching her.

---Janice Walton, age 14
An Interview with Miss Patterson

Miss Patterson, 26, is from New York City.

1. What do you think of Hattiesburg? "I think there is a lot of work to be done here."

2. Were you at the world's fair? "Yes, I was a picket."

3. Have you ever been arrested? "Yes, at the world's fair."

4. What do you think of the Freedom School? "I enjoy myself very much. I meet a lot of wonderful people."

5. Have you had any troubles with the people of Hattiesburg? "No, I haven't." --Odis Ruth T., age 11

My Brother on a Bus

My brother was coming from 25th Avenue off Hardy Street. This was a young bus driver and he told my brother to get up. My brother said, "You make me get up." The driver pressed hard on the brakes and said, "Take this dime and get off my bus!" My brother started to the back but then he thought of what my other brother said and went to the front door. The driver acted like he would not open the front door, so my brother sat down. So the driver opened the front door and my brother got off and walked. --Mattie Jean Wilson, age 10

Two Letters

Dear President Johnson,

We are in the 8th and 9th grade class of Freedom School in the state of Mississippi. We are measuring the distance around the tops of our freedom schools. We use our own spirit as the unit of measurement. Since the President is the most important person in our country, we decided we would use your spirit so as to make us free from slavery. We will call it a "Johnson" and measure our freedom schools in "Johnsons."

We know you are a busy man, but could you send us your own freedom measurement? Yours truly, Shelley S., age 13

Dear President Johnson,

There are many holidays on the calendar. There is a Mother's Day, there is a Father's Day, and there is a Ground Hog Day. But why isn't there a Freedom Day for Negroes?

Yours truly, Shelley S., age 13
Excerpts from the collection “What the Summer Project Has Meant”

What the Summer Project Has Meant by [ZH]
The Summer Project Ment So Much to Me. I Met New people. They taught us New things about our people, things that we hadn’t realized about. The life of famous colored people.
We also learned about writing different letter, that was a big help. What I liked very much was the learning the meaning of lots of words. Words that I had been over but not now ing the real meaning.
The project ment much to me discussing health, food that prevent different diseases. And if you dont get enough of food containing these vitamins, you may come in contact with these diseases.
The Library means a great deal of help. We learn steps on how to use the library, which was very important.
All of the SNCC student was just what we needed. I pray that they come back again.

On Jobs by [LB]
Our problem today is un-employment. I think the government should bring some kind of factory in the State of Mississippi and someone from the Northern Stats should operate it. I think a rug factory would be fine for those not getting welfare assistance. We thats getting Welfare assistance cant get a job.

Excerpts from Freedom School Newspapers

PALMER’S CROSSING FREEDOM NEWS,
Priest’s Creek  July 23, 1964  number one  St John’s

The Darkness of the Negro Students [LC]
Some of the Negro students have been complaining about their teachers. They said their teachers do not give any information about the freeing of their people. The information given to them was false. They teach only what the white man wants us to hear. We have been taught that the white man was responsible for the abolishing of slavery, but that is false. What about the Negro abolitionists?
We have been taught that when the Negroes were free they were helpless. But this is false because they helped themselves by building houses and raising crops.
The reason for my coming out of darkness is by attending Freedom Schools. At this school both sides of the story are told.

In Freedom Schools [RMC] age 11
I like to go to Freedom School. You would like it too. If you want to come and don’t have a way, let us know. I think we should all have our equal rights. We Negroes have been beaten, but we will never turn back until we get what belongs to us. We just want what belongs to us. We don’t want anything else. I think we as Negroes ought to have the right to vote for justice, equal rights, freedom, jobs, we need better books to read. In the stores uptown and down here we have to pay tax. That is a crying shame. God is looking down on people now. We try to hid things form people, but we can’t hide things from God. We pay tax. I think we should have a right to vote. All of our colored men are getting beaten and put in jail. This unfair I think, don’t you?
Greenwood Grumbles, Speaking of Freedom

By Editor C.T

We feel free when we can do as we please. We do not like it if anyone tries to stop us. Even a tiny baby will fly into a rage if his hands are held so that he cannot move them. This is not exactly love of freedom, for the baby has nothing in particular that he wants to do with his hands. It is more nearly hatred of restraint. But psychologists tell us that it is one of the few qualities found in all children from birth, and it is probably the basis for man’s love of freedom.

Animals too often seem to want more freedom than they have. The dog strains at the leash to run free. The pet bird flies out of his cave when given the opportunity. Wild animals in zoos pace their cages hour by hour, ready to escape at the first chance. These animals are probably better cared for and fed than they would be if they were free. But animals, like men, crave the freedom to do as they choose.

The Negroes in Mississippi are fed up with the life here. We feel that it is time something was done to stop the killings or murders, the prejudice, the mistreatment of Negroes here. Freedom is a very precious thing to any race of people, but in a nation that is supposed to be free and where oppression still exists, something really has to be done. As our forefathers fought for this nation to be free, we also say to our oppressors “Give us freedom, or give us death.”

July 23rd, Thursday

FREEDOM STAR

Published by the students of the Meridian Freedom School

I AM A NEGRO

I am a Negro and proud of its color too,
If you were a Negro wouldn’t you?
I am glad of just what I am now
To be and to do things I know how.
I’m glad to be a Negro so happy and gay
To grow stronger day by day.
I am a Negro and I want to be free as any other child,
To wander about the house and the woods and be wild.
I want to be Free, Free, Free.

Rosalyn W.

HOW I SEE MYSELF AT “21” OR OVER

My aim in life is to be a lawyer. There are not enough Negro Lawyers in Mississippi defending their fellow brothers and sisters. Some people living in Mississippi leave after or before they finish school. I do not see myself in some fancy mansion nor do I see myself living in the scums of places. I just want to live in a decent home living in the neighborhood with people. When I say people I mean both black and white. I do not believe in Segregation. I want to help people. To stop this police brutality. I see myself as a decent, respectable citizen. I want to be a nice person. And I would like for people to treat me the same way. If I do be a lawyer or whatever my profession will be, I will not marry until I finish school, grade and law school, and have a job. I mean a good job. Not babysitting and housekeeping.

No I do not plan to leave Mississippi. To help others. I want to look as well as be respectful. Although looks don’t mean everything. It’s what you know. It’s the work that you do and your aim in life. If you lead a good clean life, people will respect you no matter how you look.

With this closing I will say that “I will strive to do the best that I can.”

Anonymous
One class saw the advertisement above, which shows people on a Vista-Dome train. Everyone in the picture is white, except the waiter who is serving them. A caption under the picture says, "People like you, people you like—ride the train." Several students in the class wrote of their impressions of this picture.

While looking at the picture a thought came to my mind. Here in the picture is a group of white passengers on a train and one Negro, but he just happens to be a waiter. Everyone seems to be enjoying himself very much, but I wonder about the waiter.

—Otis M.
There's just one Negro in the picture and he's a waiter. In other words, it seems that the Negroes only ride trains as waiters for the whites. The white man is still ordering the Negro around, and it's showing that in the dining cars and other sections of the train there still might be some segregation. It shows graphically that the white man trusts a Negro to bring his food to him, to wait on him and cook for him, yet he doesn't want the Negro to eat or sit with him.

This picture is not so typical today since Negroes have the right to ride in any coach and eat in the diners, and most of them do.

The problem is to get television, newspapers, movies, and advertisements to show Negro people as ordinary people in American life.

---Sandra Jo-Ann C., age 16

Freedom

Freedom is a seven letter word with a great meaning. To many people, and myself, it is one of the greatest words when we are actually free. What I mean by free is to go to any place you want to without being involved in violence and being able to speak as you please.

Why don't white people want us to eat in the same places they eat? We are all human beings and God made us all. We can't help what color our skin is! When you are free it doesn't just mean to eat where you want to but to be free where it counts most and that is in your own mind. Then you can really tell yourself you are free and really mean it.

---Larry E., 8th grade, age 13

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EDITOR: Shirley White
ART WORK: Alan Johnson
IMPACT & OUTCOMES: Platform of the MS Freedom School Convention (1964)

[On August 6, 1964, the Mississippi Freedom Democratic Party (MFDP) holds a state-wide convention in Jackson to elect delegates to, and prepare for, the Democratic Convention. Two days later, student delegates from Freedom Schools across Mississippi convene their own state-wide, student convention in Meridian. The MFDP convention in Jackson focuses mainly on electing party officers and delegates and the strategy for challenging Mississippi's all-white "Regular" delegation at the party convention in Atlantic City. The students focus mainly on issues and program. To answer the question "When we elect people to government office, what do we want them to do?" they adopt the platform below. For more information, see Freedom Schools Concept and Organization.]

PUBLIC ACCOMMODATIONS

1. We resolve that the Public Accommodations and Public Facilities sections of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 be enforced.
2. We demand new and better recreation facilities for all.
3. We support the right of the Negro people and their white supporters to test the Civil Rights Act via demonstrations such as sit-ins. We are not urging a blood-bath through this means; we are simply demanding our Constitutional right to public assembly and seeking to test the Federal government's position.
4. Conversion of public accommodations into private clubs should be treated as a violation of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

HOUSING

The home, being the center of a child's life as well as the center of a family's, must have certain facilities in order for it to be a home and not just a building in which one eats, sleeps, and prepares to leave for the rest of the day. Therefore, be it resolved:

1. That there be an equal-opportunity-to-buy-law which permits all persons to purchase a home in any section of town in which he can afford to live.
2. That a rent control law be passed and that one should pay according to the condition of the house.
3. That a building code for home construction be established which includes the following minimum housing requirements:
   a. A complete bathroom unit
   b. A kitchen sink
   c. A central heating system
   d. Insulated walls and ceiling
   e. A laundry room and pantry space
   f. An adequate wiring system providing for at least three electrical outlets in the living room and kitchen, and at least two such outlets in the bedroom and bath
   g. At least a quarter of an acre of land per building lot
   h. A basement and attic.
4. That zoning regulations be enacted and enforced to keep undesirable and unsightly industries and commercial operations away from residential neighborhoods.
5. That slums be cleared, and a low cost federal housing project be established to house these people.
6. That federal aid be given for the improvement of houses, with long term low interest loans.
7. That the Federal government provide money for new housing developments in the state. Anyone could buy these houses with a down payment and low monthly rate. There must be absolutely no discrimination. The federal government should take action if this law is not complied with.
8. That a federal law make sure that the projects are integrated and that they are run fairly.
9. That there be lower taxes on improvements in the houses so that more people will fix up their house.
10. That the federal government buy and sell land at low rates to people who want to build there.
EDUCATION

In an age where machines are rapidly replacing manual labor, job opportunities and economic security increasingly require higher levels of education. We therefore demand:

1. Better facilities in all schools. These would include textbooks, laboratories, air conditioning, heating, recreation, and lunch rooms.
2. A broader curriculum including vocational subjects and foreign languages.
3. Low fee adult classes for better jobs.
4. That the school year consist of nine (9) consecutive months.
5. Exchange programs and public kindergarten.
6. Better qualified teachers with salaries according to qualification.
7. Forced retirement (women 62, men 65).
8. Special schools for mentally retarded and treatment and care of cerebral palsy victims.
9. That taxpayers' money not be used to provide private schools.
10. That all schools be integrated and equal throughout the country.
11. Academic freedom for teachers and students.
12. That teachers be able to join any political organization to fight for Civil Rights without fear of being fired.
13. That teacher brutality be eliminated.

HEALTH

1. Each school should have fully developed health, first aid, and physical education programs. These programs should be assisted by at least one registered nurse.
2. Mobile units, chest x-rays semi-annually and a check-up at least once a year by licensed doctors, the local health department or a clinic should be provided by the local or state government.
3. All medical facilities should have both integrated staff and integrated facilities for all patients.
4. Mental health facilities should be integrated and better staffed.
5. Homes for the aged should be created.
6. Free medical care should be provided for all those who are not able to pay the cost of hospital bills.
7. We demand state and local government inspection of all health facilities.
8. All doctors should be paid by skill, not by race.
9. Titles should be given to the staff.
10. The federal government should help the organization pay the salaries of workers.
11. All patients should be addressed properly.
12. We actively seek the abolition of any sterilization act which serves as punishment, voluntary or involuntary, for any offense.
13. In a reasonable time we seek the establishment of a center for the treatment and care of cerebral palsy victims.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS

1. The United States should stop supporting dictatorships in other countries and should support that government which the majority of the people want.
2. Whereas the policy of apartheid in the Republic of South Africa is detrimental to all the people of that country and against the concepts of equality and justice, we ask that the United States impose economic sanctions in order to end this policy.
3. We ask that there be an equitable balance between the domestic and foreign economic and social support provided by our country.

FEDERAL AID

1. We demand that a Public Works Program be set up by the federal government to create jobs for the unemployed.
2. Because of discrimination in the past, we demand preferential treatment for the Negro in the granting of federal aid in education and training programs until integration is accomplished.
a.) Background on Freedom Schools: The Freedom Schools were proposed late in 1963 by Charles Cobb, a Howard University student until he joined the SNCC staff and “a gifted creative writer,” according to Freedom School Director Professor Staughton Lynd. That “help from outside Mississippi is needed if the Negro youngster were to have any chance of access to a larger world” was an obvious fact, according to Lynd, after preliminary studies of the Mississippi educational system. In *Mississippi: The Closed Society*, James Silver noted that the per capita expenditure of the Mississippi local schools boards for the white child is almost four times the figure for the Negro child. More than the statistics, the limited subject matter available for study to Mississippi Negro students, the fear of dismissal that restrains their teachers from exploring controversial topics demonstrated that if Mississippi’s Negroes were to take part in an academic process it would have to be in a context supplemental to the schooling available through the state.

b.) Freedom Schools Operation: As of July 26, there were 41 functioning Freedom Schools in twenty communities across the state with an enrolment of 2,135 students—twice the figure projected in planning for the summer. There are approximately 175 teaching full-time in the Freedom Schools, with recruitment of 50 to 100 more in process.

The typical Freedom School has an enrollment of 25 to 100 and a staff of five to six teachers, and is held in a church basement or sometimes the church itself, often using the outdoor area as well. Typically, the morning will be taken up with a “core curriculum” build around Negro History and citizenship. The late morning or afternoon is taken up with special classes (such as French or typing—both very popular) or projects (such as drama or the school newspaper). In the evening classes are held for adults or teen-agers who work during the day.

The idea of the school is centered on discussion of the group. One suggested guide distributed by COFO to Freedom School teachers noted, “In the matter of classroom procedure, questioning is the vital tool. It is meaningless to flood the student with information he cannot understand; questioning is the path to enlightenment. It requires a great deal of skill and tact to pose the question that will stimulate but not offend, lead to unself-consciousness and the desire to express thought. . . . The value of the Freedom Schools will derive mainly from what the teachers are able to elicit from the students in terms of comprehension and expression of their experiences.”

At a time when the nation’s educators have become concerned—and stymied—by bringing to children of the non-verbal “culturally deprived” community the ability to formulate questions and articulate perceptions, the daily pedagogical revolutions that are the basis of any success in a Freedom School classroom become overwhelming upon considering that the students are Mississippi Negroes—possibly the single most deprived group in the nation—and the teachers are culturally alien products of the much-maligned liberal arts undergraduate education. An indication of what is happening among the students and their young teachers in the Freedom Schools is given by a single line of COFO advice given to the teachers: “The formal classroom approach is to be avoided; the teacher is encouraged to use all the resources of his imagination.”

According to Director Lynd, the Freedom Schools may be dealt with in the context of three general situations: a) rural areas; b) urban areas where the civil rights movement has been strong; c) urban areas where the movement has been weak. “In the first and third situations,” analyzes Lynd, “the Freedom Schools have been most successful, not just in numbers, but in what is going on there.”
In the rural areas where there is little recreation or diversion available to the Negro community, the Freedom School becomes the center of teen-age social activities, according to Lynd. Lynd draws upon the Holmes County and Carthage Freedom Schools as examples of this rural success. When the Freedom School staff arrived in Carthage, the entire Negro community was assembled at the church to greet them; when, two days later, the staff was evicted from its school, the community again appeared with pickup trucks to help move the library to a new school site. As this is being written, the Carthage Community, with the help of summer volunteers and a National Council of Churches minister, is building its own community center which will be staffed by civil rights workers and local volunteers.

An example of the second situation, the urban success, is the Hattiesburg Freedom School system, which Lynd refers to as the “Mecca of the Freedom School world.” In Hattiesburg there are more than 600 students in five schools. Each teacher has been told to find a person from the community to be trained to take over his teaching job at the end of the summer. Much of the second session in Hattiesburg will be devoted to the training of local Freedom School teachers. “Here, as in Canton,” states Lynd, “there can be no doubt that the success of the schools stemmed from the intensive civil rights campaign in the community during the months of late winter and spring.”

In Gulfport and Greenville, urban environments with alternative attractions, the movement has not been strong enough in the past to counteract traditional time-passing activities. Lynd notes, however, that the generalization has exceptions. Holly Springs, an urban area in which the movement has not been strong in the past, has a highly successful Freedom School.

It should also be noted that in Holly Springs, Carthage, and Shaw, the Freedom Schools are competing against the regular public school which are currently in session as public schools close in early spring to allow students to chop cotton.

In Mississippi’s stronghold of organized terror, the Southwest, the McComb Freedom School has proven the political value of the schools as an instrument for building confidence in the Negro community when canvassing is impractical. Lynd cites the instance of Miss Joyce Brown’s poem concerning the Freedom School held at a bombed home which moved the community to provide a meeting place for the school. “Thus”, notes Lynd, “the presence of a Freedom School helped to loosen the hard knot of fear and to organize the Negro community.” There are 108 students at the McComb Freedom School.

c) The Future of the Freedom Schools: The Freedom Schools will continue beyond the end of the Summer Project in August. Freedom Schools in several areas are already running jointly with the regular public school session. The Freedom Schools offer subjects—such as foreign languages—not offered in the regular schools, and students are attracted to the informal questioning spirit of the Freedom Schools and academics based around their experiences as Mississippi Negroes. In situations like McComb, the Freedom School has proven its value to the over-all COFO political program as an organizing instrument. Also, among the various COFO programs, the Freedom School project is the one which holds out a particular hope of communication with the white community. In at least two situations, Vicksburg and Holly Springs, white children have attended for short periods. Another factor in the decision to continue the Freedom Schools is the possibility-turned-probability that the Mississippi legislature will offer private school legislation designed to sidestep public school integration (already ordered for the fall of 1964 in Jackson, Biloxi, and Leake County).

One is faced by situations such as that in Issaquena County, where there are no Negro public schools and children must be transported into other counties. The backwardness of Mississippi’s educational system in the context of racial discrimination is demonstrated by the fact that in many areas the impact of the 1954 Supreme Court decision that separate cannot be equal was to have separate schools erected for the first time; the step previous to school segregation is concluding that Negro Children should be educated. The rural hard-core area of Issaquena County is an example of a prolonged holdout. A final but not secondary factor is the “widespread apprehension among Mississippi Negroes as to what will happen to them when the Summer Project volunteers
leave.” Staughton Lynd adds, “We want to be able to tell them that the program will not end, that momentum cumulated during the summer months will not be permitted to slack off.”

The long-range Freedom School program will be carried on through evening classes in local community centers. “Already in many communities Freedom School and Community Center programs are combined and often in the same building,” according to Lynd. One source of teachers for the continuing Freedom School program will be volunteers who decide to stay beyond the summer; if only one in five stayed, fifty teachers would remain in the state. Another source would be Southern Negro students coming in under the work-study program which provides them with a one-year scholarship to Tougaloo College after one year’s full-time work for SNCC. Other teachers would come through the local communities, under programs of training such as that which has already begun in Hattiesburg. Teachers could also be provided from the ranks of full-time SNCC staff members; in areas such as McComb where the movement can’t register American citizens as voters, civil rights workers can teach in Freedom Schools. There is no doubt but that, in Professor Lynd’s words, “It is a political decision for any parent to let his child come to a Freedom School.”

The Freedom School program can develop as an aid in enabling Mississippi Negro students to make the transition from a Mississippi Negro high school to higher education. Standardized tests will be administered to the most promising Freedom School students under the direction of the College Entrance Examination Board (CEEB) in mid-August. Evaluation of these scores and other data by the National Scholarship Service Fund for Negro Students will lead some of the Freedom School students to a program involving a) a transitional educational experience during the summer after high school, b) a reduced load during the freshman year at college, and c) financial aid. Others can be helped by the already-existing work-study program.