

FREEDOM SCHOOLS - Final Report, 1964.

The best "report" the Freedom Schools can make is the program of the Freedom School Convention (attached). Note particularly the proposal for a state-wide school boycott. School boycotts are already in progress in Shaw and Harmony. A boycott is about to begin in Indianola. There will be many such boycotts during the winter. Therefore, although the basic program of the winter Freedom Schools will be evening classes in addition to regular public school, there will be many instances where the program will have to expand (at least temporarily) into an all-day program for students boycotting the regular schools.

Numerically, the summer Freedom Schools were about twice as successful as anticipated. The number of Freedom School teachers (approximately 225) was about the expected figure. But the schools drew 2000-2500 students instead of the expected 1000, and the number of schools was approximately 50 instead of the expected 25.

In two communities Freedom Schools will continue after Aug. 21. These are Jackson, where the schools will run till Sept. 1, and Neshoba County, where the school, having begun only in mid-August, will go right on into the winter.

The following are recommendations for the Freedom Schools in winter 1964-1965:

1. An attempt should be made to continue a Freedom School program in every project area.
2. At the local level, community center and Freedom School personnel should work as one staff. Since in most places classes will occur only in the evening, obviously the teachers will be free at other times in the day for community center work. It is suggested that there be one person responsible for both Freedom School and community center activities (which will usually take place in the same building) in each community.
3. As to the state-wide administration of the schools, the recommendation is that Tom Wahman be in charge if he stays, and if he does not that Liz Fusco (coordinator of the Ruleville and Indianola schools this summer) be in charge. It is suggested also that Ralph Featherstone be kept in mind as a possible state-wide administrator, when and if the Neshoba County schools are running smoothly.
4. The most critical problem is staff for the community center-Freedom School program. 100 workers would be desirable throughout the state. 75 seems an absolute minimum to keep the programs going in each project area. Presently available are: (a) About 35 people staying on from the summer; (b) About 25 people recruited by Luis Perez who will be in Mississippi by October 1. This is not enough. Dick Jewitt reports that CORE has approximately 30-40 volunteers ready to come, in addition to the local Mississippians which it is prepared to support. My urgent recommendation is that all these 30-40 CORE volunteers be accepted for Mississippi, and assigned to community center-Freedom School work in the 1st and 4th Congressional Districts. This would bring manpower in the cc-FS program up to about the desired 100.
5. In view of the inevitable delay in recruiting and orienting new personnel, October 1 is suggested as target date for opening the full-scale winter program. Skeleton staffs should attempt to keep some program in being in each project area between August 21 and October 1.