

February 8, 1966

116 Water St.
c/o Clay
Forrest City, Ark.

Dear Alicia Kaplow,

We were very glad to get your letter about making it possible for some of our kids to go to the U of Wisconsin. Several of them have already sent away for entrance applications. I also sent your name, address, and the gist of your letter to Laura Foner in Gould, Ark. She has probably written you by now.

A number of things have been worrying our kids. The biggest problem, of course, is money. None of them will have anything. Tex Lowe and I have tried to reassure them that you and ~~ix~~ Measure for Measure would do everything to take up the slack, but considerable apprehension still exists. One problem is transportation, although none of them plan to return to Arkansas except for the summers. Another is clothing. The girls especially are sensitive about not looking good in a place where the winter weather will require extra clothing. They are all quite style-conscious and can dress very well when occasion demands, but they certainly don't have a number of changes. On these matters I think they will need reassurance.

The second point is academic. Out of six or seven kids here, probably five or six have the basic intelligence to do well at almost any college in the country. Since I've taught school myself, ~~ix~~ I hope you can consider my recommendation at least partly professional and not based wholly on enthusiasm. Their education, of course, has been abominable. For the last week and the next three we are working every night on getting ready for the Scholastic Aptitude Exams of the College Boards. They're very quick to learn, but they have to learn practically everything--especially vocabulary, but also math and even simple arithmetic. If the Boards could be waived it would sure help. There's no question they will need some review work before they go to college, and we hope to set something up for the summer. But I just don't expect their Board scores to reflect much of what they can do. So if there's any chance to get that requirement dropped, work like hell for it.

Finally, they wrote for ~~ix~~ entrance applications ten days ago and haven't heard anything. Naturally it takes time for the office to answer, but that's hard to explain to a bunch of kids who hear their friends at school all talking about what colleges they've applied to and where they're going next year (virtually all of them to Arkansas A, M & N in Pine Bluff, not a very good school). If you could pick up eight or ten applications and scholarship forms and catalogues and send them off special delivery, it would be a fine psychological lift. As you can see, there's a good deal of depression around here at times. Just the idea of going north to a mainly-white school is a little scary to begin with, and all the other questions just raise the level of insecurity out of sight. What they need right now is something definite and hopeful.

Thanks very much for all the help--if you hadn't done what you've done, I don't know where we'd be right now. Oh yes, the kids who were out of school all Fall returned after Christmas (to the Negro High School). Their first semester grades will almost all be bad, since most of the teachers refused to make any adjustment. This will be a problem too. In any event, I am prepared to write a critical evaluation of each of these kids for the University. I have a Doctorate in Education ^{from} ~~for~~ Harvard (as well as an Ed.M. and a B.A. from the same place), have taught two years of ~~ix~~ high school social studies and supervised practice teachers for three years. And I've worked closely with these kids for more than a month. I feel sure that at least three of them could make it up there right away, and two or three others with a summer, or maybe a semester of prep work.

Thanks a lot. If you're ever in Memphis, stop in and say hello. Dave Archibald