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The Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation

Evaluation of the Freedom Schools Program
in Charlotte, NC
Summer, 2017

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Evaluation of the Freedom Schools Program in Charlotte, North Carolina

Summer 2017

This report outlines the results of an evaluation of the Freedom Schools project as it was implemented in Charlotte, NC during the summer of 2017. The evaluation study was a collaborative project between the *Center for Adolescent Literacies (CFAL)* and the *Center for Educational Measurement and Evaluation (CEME)*. Both centers are housed within the College of Education at UNC Charlotte and have extensive records of collaboration with community groups as well as state and local educational agencies. CFAL staff were responsible for coordinating the data collection process and monitoring the implementation of the Freedom Schools model, and CEME staff were responsible for data analysis.

The survey items that were used in the data collection process were initially developed and piloted during the 2016 Freedom Schools program year. This process was accomplished by a collaborative effort of CFAL, CEME, and Freedom Schools. An initial set of draft survey items were developed through an iterative process by CFAL and CEME staff. The Freedom Schools program goals and objectives, and the goals of the program evaluation effort were carefully considered as each draft was reviewed and revised. Freedom schools staff were given an opportunity to review the draft survey items and were interviewed to gather their input regarding whether the survey would meet the needs of the program and effectively solicit the feedback of program participants.

Procedures

Prior to the 2017 program year, the responses from the 2016 pilot study were analyzed and the survey items were revised again. Items that either elicited responses with very little variability, or did not elicit rich responses from program participants were considered for

modification. Revisions focused on adjusting the items so that they elicited the most meaningful and complete feedback from program participants. The revisions were reviewed by both program personnel, survey research experts, and program evaluators.

After receiving approval from the site coordinators, Freedom School Scholars were invited to complete a paper-pencil version of the survey during class time. After verbally explaining the purpose of the visit, assuring them that participation was anonymous and voluntary, and outlining the process of participation, the researchers distributed the survey materials to the Scholars. The researchers assisted with data collection as needed and read each question aloud to each classroom of Scholars. Scholars were instructed to take their time as needed as the researcher continued reading the questions aloud. Scholars were invited to ask questions as they arose, and the researchers helped the Scholars complete the survey materials as needed.

Results Levels 1-3

Level 1 Scholars Likert Scale Results

One hundred and twenty-nine Level 1 Scholars completed a survey that consisted of 23 questions: 12 statements where Scholars responded using two categories (e.g., *Not true for me*; *True for me*), five short-answer questions, and six demographic questions related to race/ethnicity, sex, age, Freedom School Level, grade completed, and number of years in Freedom School.

Of the 129 Level 1 Scholars, 86 Scholars identified as African American/Black (66.7%), 23 identified as Latino/Hispanic (17.8%), 5 identified as European American/White (3.9%), 2 identified as Asian American (1.6%), 1 identified as Native American/American Indian (0.8%), 7 identified as mixed heritage (5.4%), 2 identified as Other (1.6%), and 3 declined to respond

(2.3%). Sixty eight Scholars identified as female (52.7%), 55 identified as male (42.6%), and 6 declined to respond (4.7%). On average, Level 1 Scholars were approximately seven years old ($M=7.16$, $SD=1.06$), with ages ranging from five to 10 years old. For the most recent grade completed in school, 1 reported completing a Head Start Program (0.8%), 1 completed Pre-K (0.8%), 35 completed Kindergarten (27.1%), 33 completed 1st grade (25.6%), 51 completed 2nd grade (39.5%), and 4 completed 3rd grade (3.1%). Scholars reported that their number of years in Freedom School ranged from one to four years ($M=1.59$, $SD=.79$). Of the 129 Scholars, 8 attended Freedom School at Shalom Park (6.2%), 41 attended Providence Day School (31.8%), 18 attended CN Jenkins (14.0%), 9 attended Highland (7.0%), 17 attended Christ Lutheran Church (13.2%), 14 attended Sedgefield (10.9%), 4 attended Alexander Graham (3.1%), and 18 attended Grove (14.0%). A summary of the demographics for Level 1 Scholars are reported in Table 1.

Level 1 Scholars responded to 12 questions that were categorized according to the following categories: Freedom School Experience, Reading, Agency/Making a Difference, Learning & Education, Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism, and Social/Emotional Skills. The results for Scholars' perceptions of their Freedom School Experience, Reading, and Agency/Making a Difference are reported in Table 2. Scholars responded to the extent to which the statement was true for them on a scale from (1) Not true for me to (2) True for me. The majority of Level 1 Scholars reported that they enjoyed Freedom School ($n=117$; 90.7%) and wanted to participate in Freedom School again next year ($n=105$; 81.4%). For Scholars' perceptions of Reading, most Scholars indicated that their participation in Freedom School made them a better reader ($n=105$, 81.4%), made them enjoy reading more ($n=97$; 75.2%), and encouraged them to spend more time reading ($n=101$; 78.3%). One item examined Scholars'

perceptions of Agency/Making a Difference; most Scholars indicated that they wanted to make a difference in their school and community ($n=114$; 88.4%). Table 3 outlines Level 1 Scholars' responses to three items related to their perceptions of Learning and Education, Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism as a result of their experience. Of the 129 Scholars, 118 Scholars reported that they believed they would be a better student after being a part of Freedom School (91.5%). Since being a part of Freedom School, most Scholars indicated that they felt more comfortable asking a teacher for help ($n=113$; 87.6%) and that they wanted to go to college ($n=113$; 87.6%). Level 1 Scholars' perceptions of Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism was measured by one item related to their beliefs about the importance of their future; most Scholars reported that their future was important to them ($n=117$; 90.7%). For Social/Emotional Problems Scholars' indicated that most of them know how to ask for help when dealing with conflict or social problems ($n=113$; 87.6%) and know how to work well with others ($n=102$; 79.1%).

Level 2-3 Scholars Likert Scale Results

Two Hundred and seventy-nine Level 2-3 Scholars completed a survey that consisted of 33 questions: 18 statements where Scholars' responded according to a Likert scale (e.g., *Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree*), nine short-answer questions, and six demographic questions related to race/ethnicity, sex, age, Freedom School Level, grade completed, and number of years in Freedom School.

Of the 279 Level 2-3 Scholars, 170 identified as African American/Black (60.9%), 52 identified as Latino/Hispanic (18.6%), 10 identified as European American/White (3.9%), 3 identified as Asian American (1.1%), 4 identified as Native American/American Indian (1.4%), 23 identified as mixed heritage (8.2%), 9 identified as other (3.2%), and 8 declined to respond (2.9%). One hundred and eight Scholars identified as male (38.7%), 150 identified as female

(58.1%), and 21 declined to respond (7.5%). On average, Level 2-3 Scholars were approximately 10 years old ($M=10.66$, $SD=1.50$), with ages ranging from eight to 15 years old. Approximately two-thirds of the Scholars were Level 2 ($n=192$; 68.8%), with 21.9% of the Scholars identifying as Level 3 ($n=61$) and 0.4% identifying as Level 4 ($n=1$). For the most recent grade completed in school for Level 2-3 Scholars, 1 reported completing 1st grade (0.4%), 2 completed second grade (0.7%), 62 completed 3rd grade (22.2%), 71 completed 4th grade (25.4%), 70 completed 5th grade (25.1%), 38 completed 6th grade (13.6%), 14 completed 7th grade (5.0%), and 15 completed 8th grade (5.4%). Scholars reported that their number of years in Freedom School ranged from one to nine years, with an average of approximately two years in Freedom School ($M=2.65$, $SD=1.79$). Of the 279 Scholars, 19 attended Freedom School at Shalom Park (6.8%), 40 attended Providence Day School (14.3%), 29 attended CN Jenkins (10.4%), 49 attended Highland (17.6%), 26 attended Christ Lutheran Church (9.3%), 40 attended Sedgefield (14.3%), 23 attended Alexander Graham (8.2%), and 53 attended Grove (19.0%). A summary of the demographics for Level 1 Scholars are reported in Table 4.

Level 2-3 Scholars responded to 18 statements that were categorized according to Reading, Agency/Making a Difference, Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism, Learning & Education, Social/Emotional Skills, and Freedom School Experience. Scholars responded to the extent to which they agreed with each statement using a Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (4) Strongly Agree. Three items were used to assess scholar's perceptions of reading as a result of their Freedom School experience (see Table 5). The majority of Scholars either agreed or strongly agreed that since being a part of Freedom School they were a better reader ($n=242$; 86.7%), they enjoyed reading more ($n=214$; 76.6%), and they planned to spend more time reading ($n=185$; 66.3%). For Scholars' perceptions of Agency/Making a Difference (Table

6), the majority of Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that their participation in Freedom School made them feel good about who they were ($n=249$; 89.3%). Additionally, Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that since being a part of Freedom School they were more proud of their race ($n=256$; 91.7%) and their community ($n=231$; 89.3%). Two items were used to assess for Level 2-3 Scholars' perceptions of Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism (Table 6). Scholars indicated that they agreed or strongly agreed that since being a part of Freedom School they felt better about their future ($n=253$; 90.7%) and have plans for what they wanted to do as an adult ($n=234$; 83.8%).

Additionally, Table 7 summarizes the results for Level 2-3 Scholars' perception of learning and education as a result of their experiences as Freedom School. Most Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they would be a better student next year ($n=254$; 91.1%) and graduate from high school ($n=268$; 96.1%) as a result of their participation in Freedom School. They also agreed or strongly agreed that their experiences in Freedom School made them feel more comfortable asking for help from a teacher when needed ($n=242$; 86.8%). Most Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they wanted to go college ($n=257$; 92.1%). For Level 2-3 Scholars' perceptions of social/emotional skills as a result of their Freedom School experience (Table 8), most Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they were better able to resolve conflicts or problems with others students ($n=222$; 79.6%) and adults ($n=214$; 76.7%). Level 2-3 Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they knew how to ask for help in dealing with social problem or conflicts with others ($n=236$; 84.6%) and they knew how to work well with others ($n=238$; 85.3%). Table 8 also summarizes Level 2-3 Scholars' perceptions of their Freedom School experience. Overall, the majority of Level 2-3 Scholars agreed or strongly agreed that they

enjoyed Freedom School ($n=244$; 87.4) and wanted to participate again in Freedom School next year ($n=225$; 80.6%).

A One-Way Analysis of Variance was conducted to examine differences in Level 2-3 Scholars' satisfaction with Freedom School according to Freedom School sites. Satisfaction was calculated by averaging the scores of each item to create a total score of Satisfaction. In order to calculate the mean, Scholars' were required to answer at least 14 of the 18 items to create a total score; only 2 Scholars did not meet this criterion. Cronbach's Alpha for Satisfaction was .90, demonstrating good Internal consistency. There was a statistically significant difference in satisfaction according to Freedom School site, $F(7, 269) = 3.50, p = .001$. A post hoc analysis using Tukey indicated satisfaction scores were significantly lower for The Grove ($M=3.13, SD=0.58$) in comparison to Providence Day School ($M=3.45, SD=0.31; p < .05$), and the Hedges unbiased effect size was .54, which is medium for educational research. Post hoc analysis using Tukey also revealed significantly lower satisfaction scores for The Grove in comparison to Alexander Graham ($M=3.50, SD=0.31; p < .05$). Hedges unbiased effect size was .63, which is medium for educational research. These results indicated that there were significant differences in Scholars' level of satisfaction with Freedom School between The Grove and Providence Day School and The Grove and Alexander Graham. The medium effect sizes suggest that the magnitude of these differences of these average differences in satisfaction scores between the sites were moderately large when compared to what is typically seen in educational research studies.

Findings Levels 1-3 Open-ended Responses

Freedom School Scholars responded to short answer questions to illustrate their experiences with Reading, Agency/Making a Difference, Future/Thinking/Goal

Setting/Optimism, Learning & Education, Social/Emotional Skills, and Freedom School. The qualitative data was analyzed using a constant comparison method to classify the data and compare across categories. Using open coding, the data was examined, conceptualized, and categorized. Almost every scholar responded to each short-answer question, providing substantial support for each code. The open codes were refined and compared until patterns emerged between the characteristics of the data. Core categories were then developed through constant comparison and the meaning was defined for each category. Through inductive analysis, themes emerged from the data.

Reading

Scholars at each level were asked to describe what they learned from the books that they read and discussed at Freedom School. The themes that emerged related to what the Scholars learned the books they read at Freedom School included: History, Perseverance, Peacemaking, Personal Growth, and Skills.

History. In each level, the Scholars discussed important historical figures that shaped history. Level 1 Scholars frequently mentioned Nelson Mandela, citing the number of times he was arrested, the amount of years he spent in prison, and the motives behind his actions. One student wrote, “I read a book about freedom and it tells us what happened years ago...that Nelson Mandella tried to stand up for his people. He became President of South Africa.” Other notable historical figures mentioned by Level 1 Scholars were Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Harriett Tubman. Similarly, Level 2-3 Scholars frequently mentioned Barack Obama. They indicated that he was the first African American President and that they learned about his life and “how he changed our world.” Level 2-3 Scholars also discussed Rosa Parks.

In addition to discussing prominent historical figures, most Freedom School Scholars in all levels reported that they learned about the Civil Rights Movement and its profound influence on American history. Many Scholars discussed what they learned about segregation in the 1960s: “I learned Black people didn’t get to drink white people’s water;” “I learned about family, black and white people not getting to go the same places;” “We learned how people of color had to fight for their rights.” Most Scholars at each level also indicated they learned about the importance of freedom and considered freedom to be a basic human right. One scholar reported that they learned that African American freedom is still in jeopardy, “We learned black lives are at risk and black lives matter.” Another scholar indicated that learning about Black History instilled a sense of pride in his or her race, “I learned that blacks are one the toughest race to be but I’m proud I’m African American.”

Perseverance. Many Scholars at each level suggested that the books in Freedom School taught them about the importance of perseverance. Some Scholars indicated that each person can truly make a difference through hard work, determination, and compromise. Many Scholars 1-3 reported that individuals who want to make a difference should never give up and follow their dreams. By never giving up, many Scholars reported, “you can achieve anything.” Despite difficulties and fear, some Scholars learned that persistence and initiative are needed to create change. “I learned that life isn’t easy and the most of these characters in these books share their life to show us that we can go for what we believe is right.” They suggested that no matter the circumstances, individuals can always fight to follow their dreams.

Peacemaking. Many Scholars’ suggested that the theme of peacemaking was prevalent throughout their reading in Freedom School. Some Scholars at each level discussed the importance of unity in their books and “learning to work together and not against.” They

indicated that efforts of peacemaking are needed to evoke change. For Level 1 Scholars, peacemaking was related to stopping bullying and being kind to others. One of the Level 1 Scholars suggested that she learned that individuals must “be kind to others, don’t be a bully, and build friendships.” For many of the Level 2-3 Scholars, they indicated that they learned about appreciating differences and diversity in order to promote peace and connection. They reported: “We all are born into different things and all don't all have the same things but we can all make a difference in our community;” “What I read was wings of fire and I learned even though you are a different dragon doesn't mean you can't go to the same school and be friends;” “everyone needs equal rights and hope and love never matter how mean they are how much they disagree.” Ultimately, the Level 2-3 Scholars suggested that they learned that reconciling and appreciating differences are important elements of making peace with others.

Personal Growth. Most Scholars at each level indicated that the books they read at Freedom School raised their awareness of areas for growth and taught them how to manage their emotions. Some Scholars learned the importance of being themselves and voicing their opinions. One scholar indicated that he “learned valuable lessons and how to be me.” Another scholar reported, “I learned that you have to care about your opinions.” Several Scholars also reported that the books taught them “how not to be lazy,” “how to be nice to my brother,” and “about honesty.” Furthermore, Level 2-3 Scholars reported that they learned how to manage their emotions. Two quotes that illustrate this personal growth are as follows: “I learned how to talk to people and control my anger” and “I learned about how to deal with difficult situations. Also how to keep control and be the bigger person.”

Skills. Most Level 1-3 Scholars indicated that they learned and improved their reading skills as a result of the books they read at Freedom School. Many Scholars reported progress

with reading comprehension, word pronunciation, and confidence with reading. Levels 1 Scholars reported learning “bigger words,” “how to spell,” “new sight words,” and “how to write stories.” Most Level 2-3 Scholars indicated that they learned how to compare and contrast books, understand the underlying moral/lesson in each story, and create conversations around each story. Many indicated that they learned to feel more confident in their ability to read and understand books and share what they learned with others, which gave them an appreciation for reading. For example, one scholar stated, “I learned that even if you don't like reading, just try picking up a book and the more you read the more you love to read. Reading is important and discussion can improve your reading.”

Agency/Making a Difference

Scholars at each level were asked to describe how they could make a difference in their school and their community. Most Scholars at each level indicated that they could make a difference in their school and community through themes of Support, Agency, and Environment.

Support. Most of the Scholars suggested that they could make a difference in the community through support. For example, Level 1 Scholars reported that they would make a difference by “helping others with their groceries” to “helping if somebody is sick” to “helping people have a place to live.” Many Level 2-3 Scholars reported that they would help others by standing up for what they believe is right. One scholar wrote, “Bystander effect=but not just standing there and not helping. Doing something (I care for all people, different race, and act).” Many at each level also reported that they could support others in their school and community by sharing. For younger Scholars, sharing involved sharing their toys, money, umbrellas, and games. For older Scholars, sharing was related to sharing their knowledge with others, teaching their language to others, and teaching others right from wrong. Furthermore, some Scholars

indicated that they could support others in their school and in their community by changing their attitudes. One scholar wrote, “I can make a difference by being nice to everyone, say please, be respectful, responsible and caring.” Another wrote, “I can make a difference by showing things to prove I can show my pride and my confidence in my community.”

Agency. Many Scholars at each level indicated that they could make a difference in their school and community through altruistic acts, leadership, and working to change the system. Many Scholars wrote that they would work to make the world better. For example, a Level 2-3 scholar stated, “I can change the world. I can unite people and stop having conflict.” A Level 1 scholar reported, “I will create a nice, good, and happy world. I will change the world.” In addition, some Level 2-3 Scholars reported that they would change their schools and communities by being a leader. Some quotes that illustrate this theme are as follows: “I can be a role model to other kids to get their work done.” “I can make a difference by being a leader in my school instead of a follower.” “Always do the right thing and people always will copy your good behavior;” “I can set an example for people who don’t know any better.” Lastly, some Scholars reported that they can make a difference in their schools and communities through global and systemic changes. Several Scholars at each level indicated that they would work to change laws to create equity and access for all individuals and “doing more citizen work and changing the way we learn and help others.” This suggests that Scholars would try to consider the social context contributing to issues in order to promote change.

Environment. The Freedom School Scholars at each level discussed that they would make changes in their school and the community by improving the environment. Many Scholars suggested that they would work to keep the environment clean by educating others about littering, picking up trash, and recycling. A few Level 2-3 Scholars indicated that they would

improve their schools and community by “planting seeds and creating community gardens,” minimizing “harm to animals,” and not using cars “because of what it does to the air.” In addition, most Scholars reported that they would engage in community service to improve the physical and social environments of their schools and communities. One scholar wrote, “I will work, build stuff in the community, and keep it clean to help others.” Others reported that they would volunteer, hold fundraisers, donate food, and engage in more community service to improve individuals’ experiences in their school and community environments.

Future Thinking/Goal Setting

Freedom School Scholars at each level were asked to list their future plans and describe what career they might want to have when they were an adult. The majority of Scholars indicated that they wanted to finish high school, attend college, and possibly become a helping professional, health professional, legal professional, or professional athlete. Other responses included: working in the food industry, engaging in performing arts, becoming a civil servant, working in STEM-related fields, and becoming an entrepreneur.

Learning & Education (2-3)

Level 2-3 Scholars responded to an open-ended question where they were asked to describe how being a part of Freedom School is likely to help them in school in the coming school year. Scholars’ responses to their questions were grouped into two themes: preparation and transformation.

Academic Preparation. Most Freedom School Scholars suggested that their experiences in Freedom School would prepare them academically and personally for the upcoming school year. Many Scholars reported that they would be more focused, motivated, confident in their reading abilities, and comfortable in asking for help. Many Scholars also indicated that their skills

and writing skills, preparing them to “read better,” “faster,” “smoothly,” “comprehend better,” and “read out loud.” For some, they believed their experiences with Freedom School would allow them to meet the standard for reading, where they believed that their “reading will be up to date.” For others, they suggested that Freedom School accelerated their learning, placing them ahead of their peers. One scholar wrote, “because when we have to read a big book I will already know how to read big books.” Another reported, “I might be ahead of my peers in my class.” They suggested that enhancing their reading skills would improve their reading status and Scholars on the end of the year assessment. Because many Scholars believed that they greatly improved in reading, the Scholars discussed that they would use what they learned in Freedom School to help others who are struggling in school. One scholar reported, “It would help me in school next year because I will be ahead of people in my class and I will use what I learned to help other students who need help.” Overall, most Scholars suggested that their experiences in Freedom School would help them feel prepared in the upcoming school year and be able to use their experiences to help others who need it.

Transformation. Furthermore, most Freedom School Scholars suggested that their experience at Freedom School was transformative, contributing new perspectives, personal characteristics, and social skills that would aid them in the upcoming school year. Many Scholars reported that Freedom School contributed to greater acceptance of themselves, their peers, and their education. For example, one scholar wrote: “FS can help you become a better person and teaches you not to be worried being yourself is okay. I think Freedom School has changed my life.” Other Scholars reported: “I will be more open-minded and interested to learned;” “It will help me with my growth and what the teachers are trying to ask;” “It did teach me how to accept others for who they are.” Along with this acceptance, some Scholars indicated that their

experience at Freedom School would help them work better with others and feel more comfortable to sharing about themselves. “It helps me let more information out about me it makes me not shy anymore. I can express myself and let others get to know me.” As a whole, Scholars suggested that Freedom School provided them with transformative experiences, where experiencing changes both academically and personally gave them more confidence to begin the next school year.

Social/Emotional Skills (2-3)

Level 2-3 Scholars responded to an open-ended question where they were asked to describe any changes they experienced in how they work with others after being a part of Freedom School. Scholars’ responses to their questions were group into two themes: Collaboration and Development.

Collaboration. Since being a part of Freedom School, some Scholars indicated that they were better able to work as a team. Many Scholars reported that before starting Freedom School, they wanted to work by themselves and learn at their own pace. However, after participating in Freedom School, many Scholars concluded that working with others was “more fun,” made them “proud of [their] work with others,” and helped them to “be a better teammate.” Most Scholars suggested that through group work they also learned to cooperate and communicate with others to complete group projects. Scholars stated: “It has boosted my cooperation and friendship skills; “you talk [to] them how you want to get talk to and be nice;” and “sometimes I get mad if they get something wrong now I don’t.”

Moreover, some suggested that their exposure to working with other students expanded their social networks by allowing them to engage with a variety of students. For example, one Scholar remarked that group work in Freedom School “opened up [his or her] choices in my

friends.” As a result, many Scholars were able to build relationships with their classmates, learn new perspectives, and develop social skills. “Working with others makes me feel good because I work and see what they know about things and get to know them better.” Another scholar stated, “When I work with others, I get to know them and interact with the people around me.” This improved their ability to ask for and offer support when needed. “They make more help. We can help each other out with hard activities.” This suggests that their experience in Freedom School helped them collaborate more effectively with others by learning how to support each other when needed.

Development. Many Scholars indicated that their experience at Freedom School also contributed to their development as students and people. Some Scholars suggested that working with others helped them with their reading, writing, and vocabulary. They reported that group work improved their handwriting, their ability to understand the meaning of words, and their reading in front of the class. Most Scholars also reported that working with others contributed to self-improvement. Scholars stated that they were more “patient,” “open with peoples’ ideas,” “not scared to be [themselves],” “friendly,” “honest,” and “creative.” For those struggling with anger and heightened reactivity, they reported greater ability to cope with difficult circumstances. One scholar wrote, “I have anger issues so I learned to just not get so mad and I learned stuff is not that important to get mad over.” Though many reported a greater ability to manage uncomfortable emotions and difficult circumstances, some Scholars still reported difficulty in working with others. Some indicated that they struggled with sharing their ideas and working comfortably in groups. For example, some Scholars suggested that they preferred to work by themselves, which made it difficult to fully participate in group work. “I find it hard sometimes. Sometimes I just like to work by myself so I haven’t seen many changes.” Others

reported that they did not see many changes in working with groups because they did not get along with other students. Due to personality conflicts, some Scholars reported minimal changes in how they work with others due to people being mean or not liking them. For example, one student stated that how they work with others is “really really bad because people don’t like me at all.” This suggests that despite Scholars’ desire to work with other students other some Scholars’ attitudes in the classroom prevented some students from engaging in group work and learning how to improve their teamwork skills.

Freedom School Experience

Freedom School Scholars at Levels 2-3 responded to four short answer items asking them to describe their Freedom School experience. Largely, most Scholars were asked to describe what they liked about Freedom School and what they believed could improve Freedom School. Level 1 Scholars were asked one question about their perspectives of how Freedom School can be improved.

Liked. The aspects of Freedom School that the Levels 2-3 Scholars enjoyed can be split into two themes: Connection and Activities. First, many Scholars indicated that they believed that Freedom School facilitated their connections with their peers and Freedom School staff. Some Scholars reported that Freedom School helped them meet new people, make more friends, and spend time with people outside of their regular friend group. “I met new people who I can see myself having a long-term relationship with...friends both new and old.” Many Scholars also reported the importance of bonding with the Freedom School Staff, particularly the Interns. For example, one scholar wrote, “I got to joke around with the Interns and they made me feel confident.” Another scholar stated that, “the best part of Freedom School was my Interns,” suggesting that these relationships were central to their Freedom School experience.

In addition to connection with others, many Level 2-3 Scholars indicated that the activities were crucial to their Freedom School experience. Most Scholars suggested that the field trips were by far the best part of their Freedom School experience. Some Scholars reported that they especially enjoyed the field trips to bowling and gravity. Moreover, most Scholars listed Harambee, Jubilee, D.E.A.R time, and I.R.C. as enjoyable aspects of Freedom School. Lastly, some Level 2-3 Scholars reported that they enjoyed the various activities used to facilitate learning. For example, one scholar stated, “I like how they make it so interesting by having you do journal entries as the person in the book.”

Areas for Growth. Many Levels 1-3 Scholars reported a variety of aspects that could improve Freedom School. These areas for growth are categorized by the themes of Positive Learning Environment and Organization and Structure. Many Scholars suggested that facilitating a positive learning environment would greatly improve Freedom School. First, some Scholars suggested that discipline is needed to improve freedom school and the learning environment. Several Scholars’ reported that “better behavior from other kids” and “teaching kids to cooperate” would improve Freedom School. Second, some Scholars indicated that courtesy is needed to produce a productive learning environment. For example, Scholars stated: “It can be improved if the kids weren’t so disrespectful;” “If people would stop being loud in the hallways and on the bus;” and “Freedom School [could] be improved by making people not have to fuss at field trips with everyone doing that thing.” Third, many Scholars remarked that changes in Scholars’ attitudes could improve Freedom School, such as “being happy,” “more hype,” “nicer,” and “having more confidence.” Fourth, some Scholars indicated that improvements in their physical learning environment could improve Freedom School. Many Scholars located at Christ Lutheran Church, CN Jenkins, and Sedgefield reported that larger classrooms and bigger

spaces for Harambe and other activities would improve their Freedom School experience. Some Shalom Park Scholars indicated that they would appreciate a playground or gym and more water stations. Lastly, many Scholars reported that more and better teachers and Interns would improve Freedom School. For example, one scholar wrote, “The Interns can be more nicer and give me more chances and listen to me.” Another scholar stated that Freedom School could be improved by hiring “teachers who will make a DIFFERENCE and people who get hype.”

Furthermore, some Scholars reported that improving the organization and structure of Freedom School is an area for growth. Most Scholars reported that they need longer and more frequent breaks in their day and would appreciate time outside. In addition, some Scholars reported that integration between levels would improve Freedom School. Scholars wrote: “Letting us bond more with other levels other than harambe in the morning” and “the level 3 help out the little kids during reading like reading to the Level 1.” Some Scholars also indicated that more books and more time reading would improve Freedom School. Many Scholars particularly stated that they would like more varied subject matter, such as art, math, science, language, and social studies.

Servant Leader Intern Likert Scale Item Results

Fifty-five Servant Leader Interns completed a survey that consisted of 36 questions: 20 statements where Interns responded according to a Likert scale (e.g., Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Agree, Strongly Agree) with some offering an option to explain their Likert scale response, 10 short-answer questions, and six demographic questions related to race/ethnicity, sex, age, Freedom School level served, and education status.

Of the 55 Interns, 41 identified as African American/Black (74.5%), 3 identified as Latino/Hispanic (5.5%), 10 identified as European American/White (18.2%), and 1 identified as

mixed heritage (1.8%). Six Interns identified as male (10.9%) and 49 identified as female (58.1%). On average, Interns were approximately 20 years old ($M=20.32$, $SD=1.52$), with ages ranging from 18 to 25 years old. Of the Interns that completed the survey, 22 Interns served Level 1 (40%), 21 Interns served Level 2 (38.1%), and 10 served Level 3 (18.2%). Most Interns identified their educational status as an undergraduate student ($n=46$; 83.6%), with other Interns identifying as graduate student ($n=3$; 5.5%) and college graduates ($n=6$; 10.9%). A summary of the Servant Leader Interns' demographics are provided in Table 9.

Servant Leader Interns were provided 19 statements and asked to respond to the extent to which they agreed with each statement using a Likert scale ranging from (1) Strongly Disagree to (4) Strongly Agree. Tables 10 through 13 summarize the Interns' responses to each item and their perceptions of their Freedom School Experience; College, Career, and Future Plans; Volunteering, Community Engagement, and Advocacy; Agency/Soft Skills; and Final Thoughts. Six items were used to assess Interns' perceptions of the Freedom School Experience (Table 16). The majority of Interns agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoyed their work as an Intern ($n=52$; 94.5%) and would return as a Freedom School Intern in the future ($n=49$; 89.1%). Most Interns agreed or strongly agreed that they possessed skills that aided them in their work at Freedom School ($n=52$; 94.6%) and that they learned new skills as a result of their work at Freedom School ($n=50$; 90.9%). The majority of Interns also agreed or strongly agreed that they experienced successes ($n=51$; 92.7%) and challenges ($n=50$; 90.9%) in their work as Freedom School Servant Leader Interns. For Interns' perceptions of College, Career, and Future Plans, two items were used to assess any changes in their educational or career plans as result of their Freedom School experience (Table 17). Most Interns disagreed or strongly disagreed that their

plans for their education ($n=41$; 74.5%) and career ($n=36$; 65.5%) changed as a result of their Intern experience.

Additionally, Table 18 summarizes the results for Interns' perceptions of volunteering, community engagement, and advocacy as a result of their experiences at Freedom School. Most Interns agreed or strongly agreed that their vision for making a difference ($n=53$; 96.4%) and their view of their ability to make a difference in the community and world ($n=54$; 98.2%) changed as a result of their Freedom School experience. Interns agreed or strongly agreed that they were more likely to work in the community ($n=51$; 92.8%) and advocate for both children ($n=52$; 94.6%) and families ($n=52$; 94.6%) living in poverty. Furthermore, Interns agreed or strongly agreed that their Freedom School experience changed or expanded their understanding of education ($n=52$; 94.5%) and multiculturalism ($n=49$; 89.1%). For Interns' perceptions of Agency/Soft Skills (Table 19), the majority Interns' agreed or strongly that they enhanced their leadership skills ($n=54$; 98.2%), were better at working with others ($n=52$; 94.5%), were better able to talk and work with others ($n=54$; 94.5%), and were better at adapting to changes in a variety of context as a result of their Freedom School experience ($n=55$; 100%). Lastly, Table 10 displays that the majority of Interns would recommend the role of Servant Leader Intern to others ($n=52$; 94.5%).

Servant Leader Intern Open-ended Response Findings

Freedom School Scholars responded to short answer questions to illustrate their experiences with Freedom School; College, Career, & Future Plans; Volunteering, Community Engagement, & Advocacy; and Agency/Soft Skills. The qualitative data was analyzed using a constant comparison method to classify the data and compare across categories. Using open coding, the data was examined, conceptualized, and categorized. Almost every Intern responded

to each short-answer question, providing substantial support for each code. The open codes were refined and compared until patterns emerged between the characteristics of the data. Core categories were then developed through constant comparison and the meaning was defined for each category. Through inductive analysis, themes emerged from the data.

Freedom School Experience

Servant Leader Interns completed 5 short-answer questions related to their Freedom School Experience. Interns were asked to describe what they liked and disliked about Freedom School, their successes and challenges as Freedom School Interns, their skills development, and their perceptions of Freedom School's areas for growth.

Liked/Disliked. Most Freedom School Servant Leader Interns reported a number of aspects of Freedom School that they liked and disliked. The aspects of Freedom School that Interns liked can be categorized into four themes: bonding, growth, and perspective. Most Interns indicated that their ability to bond with the Scholars was a positive aspect of their Freedom School experience. One Intern mentioned:

I really liked teaching and changing the lives of children this summer. The Scholars really fall in love with their Interns and gain a special connection to them. It also allows them to make progress in their academic careers. It's really special that I can do that for Scholars in Charlotte.

Other Interns wrote: "I loved the learning opportunities it gave me to bond with my Scholars; "I enjoyed getting to build relationships with my kids, and getting to do different activities with them." These interactions were reported to be meaningful for both Interns and Scholars. In addition, some Interns reported that relationships with other Interns and the site coordinators were positive aspects of their Freedom School experience. These relationships allowed Interns to

seek learn about others background and form new perspectives. One Intern wrote, “I loved the opportunities it gave me to give back to the community of Charlotte and learn more about kids living in poverty.” Additionally, many Interns reported that they enjoyed witnessing growth in the Scholars’ skills and abilities. “I learned a lot about myself working with the Scholars. It was amazing seeing the light in their eyes when they made a connection or got a right answer.”

Alternatively, most Interns also indicated that there were many aspects of their Freedom School experienced that they disliked. There were three themes associated with Interns’ responses: Organizational Issues, Lack of Support, and Attitude. Some Interns reported that there were many organizational and procedural issues that made them feel frustrated with Freedom School. Some Interns suggested that the training in Tennessee was unhelpful and did not provide them with the foundation needed to effectively begin working at Freedom School—not having enough training on classroom management or how to apply ideas in the toolbox. For example, one Intern reported, “I also felt that Tennessee was very disorganized and the way training was set up offered little time to practice what we were learning effectively.” Other frustrations were related to not having enough books, not having enough freedom in lesson planning, traveling to other sites for breakfast and lunch, and too much staff and Intern turnover. These organizational issues contributed to some Interns’ perceptions of limited support at their sites. For example, one Intern stated, “the disorganization and seemingly lack of support in the classrooms took its toll on me.” Another wrote, “I had issues with certain leadership at my site and how it limited what I could do with my students. The leadership also affected the way my students were treated, my desire to go to work, and my confidence in my work.”

Furthermore, many Interns suggested that the Scholars’, Interns’, and site coordinators’ attitudes and behaviors tainted their experience. Some Interns reported that some Scholars were

disrespectful and disengaged from the process, which made their experience more difficult. Other issues with Scholars' attitudes and behaviors at Freedom School were related to the ages and gender of Scholars in the Interns' classes. One Intern reported that it was difficult to have mostly female Scholars in her class, which contributed to drama and disagreement throughout the summer. Another Intern suggested that working with Level 3 students was something he disliked because of issues related to their developmental stage in life. The Interns also disliked other Interns' negative mentality and approaches to Freedom School. Two Interns wrote about negative Intern attitudes with the organization's leadership and Scholars: "I would have had a better experience if they had been more professional and willing to accept feedback from our site coordinator, rather than get upset and gossip after debrief and 'at home,'" and "I disliked the attitude of some of the Interns because in many occasions they would belittle their Scholars verbally in their face and behind their backs." Further, some Interns perceived negative attitudes by the site coordinators' and people in authority. These Interns indicated that they thought those in leadership positions often "belittled" the Servant Leader Interns and criticized the Interns, which contributed to their perceptions of limited support at their sites.

Successes/Challenges. Most Interns also reported a number of successes and challenges throughout their Freedom School experience. Successes were grouped into three themes: Learning, Connection, and Classroom Management. Many of the Interns' successes were related to Scholars' learning and achievement. Most Interns reported that it was rewarding to watch their Scholars' grow in their reading skills and ability to manage their emotions. For example:

The successes I faced as an SLI are majority of my Scholars that started out not enjoying the IRC or activities to reading to me and explaining what they have learned. I also had a

scholar that did not know how to read or write his letters and by week six he wrote his alphabet and told me the differences between uppercase and lowercase.

I saw some of my children learn to handle their emotions differently as the summer progressed. During the first couple of weeks, it felt like at least one of my students would cry every day. By the last couple of weeks, none of my students cried. They also got better at separating themselves from situations that frustrated them which I consider a big success.

Seeing Scholars change seemed to provide many Interns with a sense of fulfillment that motivated them throughout the summer.

Additionally, many Interns were proud of their ability to form connections with their Scholars. Some Interns reported that Scholars initially were reserved, and they worked hard to “break down the walls of kids who were having a tough time.” As a result, many Interns reported successes related to forming strong relationships with Scholars and challenging them to be their best. “The successes I experienced were getting to know each and every one of my Scholars. I feel that I had a bond with each one, and am so happy that each one made it through the summer successfully. I’m sad to see them go!” These strong connections with Scholars supported their work in the classroom and contribute to better classroom management. One Intern stated, “Great classroom management sets the stage for individual scholar improvement and growth in learning.”

Similarly, challenges were categorized into two themes: Behavioral Issues and Lack of Support. Most Interns reported that they struggled managing behavioral issues in the classroom and conflict between students. Some Interns reported difficulty with “being consistent with

discipline,” “challenging disrespectful attitudes,” “getting Scholars to talking,” and “working with difficult personalities.” One Intern described his experience of trying to resolve conflict in his classroom:

...in my classroom many of my students didn't like each other so I had to work very hard to be careful who I sat near each other, who worked together, and just generally monitor their interactions so that they wouldn't be mean to each other

These issues in the classroom motivated some Interns to seek support from other Interns and site leaders. However, some Interns did not believe they were supported at their sites, which posed another significant challenge. For example, a first year Intern wrote, “It just seemed like as a first year I was expected to know everything there was to know about the program. I felt unsupported.” Similarly, some returning Interns also felt unsupported. One Intern wrote:

I thought that I could use old tactics to get what I want but I had to create new ones.

Tactics with the Scholars, my team, and my habits. I had to rearrange and recreate new ones. I felt as though I didn't have the same love and support as I did last year.

This lack of support was “draining” and reportedly contributed to some Interns feeling disconnected and disengaged towards the end of the summer.

Skills. Most Servant Leader Interns at Freedom School indicated that they possessed and learned a number of skills that helped them work effectively in Freedom School. Some Interns reported that they possessed a variety of important internal dispositions that critically influenced their success as Interns, such as patience, perseverance, compassion, creativity, and flexibility. In addition, some Interns suggested that their interpersonal skills, time management skills, problem solving skills, and ability to plan were essential to being effective in the classroom.

I have really strong communication skills. Having those communication skills allowed me to connect better with my Scholars, by relating and embodying their culture. Things I were able to take from my Scholars by just talking to them were; slang, music, fashion trends, etc. Those things helped me "fit in" making it easier to build that relationship. Creativity is another skill I used to make it through the summer. I was able to spice up my IRC so it was never the same. It kept my Scholars engaged, interested and guessing what I would do next.

Many Interns also cited their skill development from previous work experiences as skills that bolstered their work as servant leader Interns. Some Interns worked previously in education and reported that they were able to build on classroom management skills, problem solving skills, and communication skills through their experience at Freedom School. Other Interns mentioned skills learned from previous jobs that involved work with children, such as passion, organizational skills, and leadership skills. The Interns reported that starting with a skillset that was fitting for Freedom School supported their work as Interns throughout the summer.

Moreover, the Interns reported that they learned valuable skills necessary for working in education and other fields. There were two categories of learned skills for Interns at Freedom School: Classroom Management Skills and Internal Dispositions. Interns reported that they learned conflict resolution skills, behavioral management skills, leadership skills, and organizational skills as a result of their Freedom School experience. For example:

Time-management is a new skill I learned as a result of my work as a Servant Leader Intern. I thought I had great time management skills as an Intern, until I started at QC Family Tree. Having to travel to First Ward cut down on a lot of time for my IRC. I had

to learn how to manage my time to get the important parts into my lesson so that the kids took away something each day.

Another Intern wrote that he or she learned “how to scaffold, role call and not take things so seriously.” Additionally, Interns reported significant growth in Internal dispositions as a result of their Freedom School experience. Most Interns indicated that they developed and cultivated patience in their role as Servant Leader Interns. Though many Interns reported that they believed they had patience before starting Freedom School, some Interns suggested that they “gained a new level of patience” and a greater appreciation for this disposition. The Interns also listed empathy, flexibility, confidence, compassion, and consistency as dispositions that they developed and cultivated through their experience as Freedom School.

Freedom School Areas for Growth. The Servant Leader Interns also provided feedback related to Freedom School’s areas for growth. These were divided into three themes: Support, Fit Assessment, and Preparation. First, some Interns indicated that they needed more support from site coordinators and organizational leaders. In order to better serve the Scholars, some Interns suggested that they would appreciate open lines of communication and reciprocal relationships with those in authority. An Intern suggested, “Make sure more people are on the same page and make a way for site coordinators to spend more time with us and getting to know us.” At times, some Freedom School Interns also reported that they felt underappreciated and disrespected by the site leaders. One Intern wrote, “Be more supportive, yes we serve the Scholars, but in order for us to serve we have to also feel the love and appreciation you want us to provide to them.” Some Interns indicated they wanted more support from site and organizational leaders which would make them feel valued in their role as Servant Leader Interns.

Second, several Interns suggested that Freedom School could be improved by assessing for Intern fit, both in hiring Interns and site placement. Some Interns suggested conducting personality and strengths-based assessments to determine Intern placement in various levels and activities. One Intern stated, “I suggest a personality assessment in the application process to help with Intern place[ment]. By knowing which Interns are introverts and extroverts and would help with dynamic of the site.” In addition, many Interns indicated that “the process for choosing Interns should be more rigorous.” For example, one Intern wrote:

Please do not hire individuals who are not truly meant to be in this work. Working with our Scholars for Freedom School Partners is an extremely sacred position, and being given this position comes with a lot of responsibility that some are truly just not ready for.

Third, some Interns reported that they wanted more organized and thorough training to prepare them for their role as Servant Leader Interns, especially for first year Interns. Some Interns perceived that site coordinators treated Scholars unfairly; many Interns felt unprepared to manage these types of issues within the site. One Intern wrote:

When I first started I thought Freedom School was the pillar of acceptance and serving children no matter the circumstance...I do not believe in just sending kids home and pretty much “giving up” on them because they don’t listen. After all, what is that going to solve? The background and situations some of these Scholars come from are stressful environments...Overall, I know Freedom School is more from a “business” standpoint and it’s important to keep that good image of Freedom School, however, keeping the Scholars best interest and being patient while not expecting things to be perfect is important to keep in mind.

Similarly, many Interns indicated that they did not feel safe providing feedback to their site coordinators, which created conflict between Interns and site leadership. Some Interns indicated that they did not want to voice their opinions and experiences in site debriefing out of fear that the site coordinators would “take it personally” or “misconstrue” the circumstances. They also were concerned about how other Interns might respond and reportedly felt isolated in their experiences. One Intern reported:

Interns, including myself, remained unable to express how we felt because with we felt embarrassed to do so in the group among Interns (like myself, because I was outside of their gossip circle), or that we were nervous to confront our site coordinator out of fear of how they would react.

Some Interns did not believe that the training that was provided prepared them for organizational issues that the site, and therefore, they felt uncomfortable conveying their needs to site leaders.

College, Career, & Future Plans

Servant Leader Interns responded to three short-answer questions that asked them to explain changes in their career-related plans as a result of their experiences as Interns in Freedom School and how they might use what they learned from Freedom School in their experiences in the future.

Change of Plans. Though the majority of Interns reported that they did not change their educational or career plans as a result of their experience, some Freedom School Interns that did report a change in plans suggested that they changed majors and considered careers related to their Freedom School experience. For example, some Interns who previously majored in Chemistry, STEM, and nursing were now interested in majoring in Education, School

Psychology, and Sociology. One Intern suggested that his or her major was Education, however, experiences at Freedom School sparked their interest in studying Child Psychology:

I am currently an education major, however I always planned on getting my M.Ed/EdD in Higher Education/Administration. I am now thinking about going into a Master's program for child psychology. Honestly, the trip to KinderMourn got me extremely interested in child psychology. I haven't completely decided, but I am surely thinking about it.

Another Intern indicated that before Freedom School, he or she was undecided in his or her major. However, after serving as an Intern, he or she is now going to major in Psychology to hopefully become a School Psychologist in the future.

Additionally, some Interns suggested that after their experiences in Freedom School, they now wanted to pursue careers related to their experiences at Freedom School. Many Interns suggested that their experiences at Freedom School changed how they envisioned their career. For example, one Intern discussed that he or she planned to be an elementary education teacher. Though Freedom School confirmed his or her desire to pursue a degree in Education, he or she is now considering teaching older students and pursuing degrees in secondary education. Another Intern stated:

I am still pursuing a career in a legal profession, but Freedom School helped me see how I could apply that type of work to children's defense, and I really found myself questioning whether or not I would become a teacher. I have always valued education, but never thought I become an educator...we'll see.

Using FS Experience in the Future. Most Interns suggested that they would use what they learned from their Freedom School experience in three ways: Connection, Informing Work,

and Perspective. First, Interns reported that their experiences would help them foster connections with others in various contexts. Many indicated that it would benefit how they support and interact with children, both personally and professionally. Other Interns indicated that their experiences at Freedom School would improve their ability to “connect with all types of people in various settings” and would advance their skills related to professional presentations and engaging audiences. Second, many Interns discussed that their experience at Freedom School would inform their work as students, teachers, and future professionals in an assortment of professional contexts. For example, Interns who aspired to be teachers listed that they would use “positive reframing,” “structure,” “communication skills,” and “lesson planning skills” in their future classrooms. Other Interns discussed that the skills that they learned Freedom School would be applicable in any work setting, and they planned to use what they learned related to “time management,” “flexibility,” “patience,” and “building relationships.”

Third, many Freedom School Interns acknowledged that their experiences in Freedom School altered their perspectives. Some Interns suggested that Freedom School provided them with more awareness and empathy for all individuals, particularly related to Scholars from marginalized populations. For example, one Intern stated, “My entire thought process will be different in the way that I will never take things for granted because there is always people who are in worst situations.” Another Intern echoed similar sentiments:

From Freedom School, perhaps the most important thing I have learned is to be more empathetic, and to keep in mind that everyone comes from different backgrounds, and to always search for a deeper cause of something, whether it’s a problem or a habit.

This suggests that Freedom School expanded individuals’ awareness of contextual factors that shape individuals attitudes, behaviors, and experiences.

Volunteering, Community Engagement, & Advocacy

Servant Leader Interns completed three short-answer questions related to their Freedom School experience. In their responses, Interns were asked to discuss any changes to their thoughts about their ability to making a difference in their community and world, their thoughts about education and multiculturalism, and their thoughts about children and families living in poverty.

Changes in Thoughts about Making a Difference. Most Freedom School Interns indicated that they experienced changes in their thoughts about making a difference in their community and world according to two categories: Deeper Understanding and Involvement. Many Interns reported that they developed a deeper understanding of problems within the community and their capacity to solve them. One Intern wrote, “I will be working more closely with the community now, and have a deeper understanding and meaning of what that looks like because of my experience in Freedom Schools this summer.” Additionally, some Interns described a newfound awareness to issues within the community and the idea that “little acts can be just as important as big acts.” This understanding of the larger picture reportedly contributes to some Interns’ desire to become more involved in the community. Many Interns suggested that their experience with Freedom School inspired them to become more “active” in the community, seeking opportunities to “help build it for positive improvement.” Some Interns reported that greater activity in the community could involve, “volunteering in schools,” “tutoring children,” and “protesting.”

Changes in Thoughts about Multiculturalism. Many Interns also reported that their experience in Freedom School significantly changed their thoughts about education and multiculturalism. Interns’ responses were categorized by two themes: Awareness and Education

System. Some Interns indicated that their experience in Freedom School exposed them to a variety of cultures, backgrounds, and experiences. In addition, they discussed how important it was for Scholars' to have exposure to diverse individuals and develop awareness of cultural issues. For example, "We are so different but the same in many ways. Teaching our children to respect, acknowledge, and learn about another culture is [the] best education." Some Interns suggested that classroom discussions and activities could be enriched by including cultural components and diversity issues. Also, a few Interns' indicated that their thoughts about the larger education system changed as a result of their experience at Freedom School. Issues related to equal access and opportunities were topics discussed by Interns. Some Interns reported that they believed that the education system is failing students, particular minority populations. As a result, these Interns' reportedly valued a program that supported marginalized students' learning and learned how to engage students from all backgrounds.

Changes in Thoughts about Poverty. The Freedom School Interns discussed that they also experience changes in their thoughts about children and families living in poverty. These responses were categorized according to two themes: Empathy and Advocacy. First, Some Interns suggested that their exposure to Scholars' of lower socioeconomic backgrounds fostered empathy. Many Interns' believed that hearing about Scholars' backgrounds and having the opportunity to interact with Scholars' families allowed them to further identify with their experiences. As most Interns empathized with Scholars' histories and personal stories, they were better able to understand their behaviors and connect with them. One Intern reported, "I am able to work with children and see them as children first and not take their attitudes personally because I understand more what they are going through and can relate to some extent." Second, several Interns indicated that seeing the needs of the Scholars and their families inspired them to

be advocates for those struggling and living in poverty stricken neighborhoods. Some Interns' reported that they learned firsthand about the "cycle of poverty" and how even the "littlest amount of help will make a difference." For example, one Intern stated:

I now know that the cycle of poverty isn't caused by laziness. These kids are set up for failure from the beginning. They shouldn't have to work twice as hard as kids that aren't living in poverty. Everyone should have equal opportunities to succeed.

As a result, some Interns reported that they would be greater advocates for individuals living in similar situations and work hard to create change.

I advocated for children in poverty and families in poverty before, but I did not "truly" advocate until I experienced working with kids and their families. You should know what is going on in your own city, or your own state, including not just factual or second-hand information, but experientially.

Agency/Soft Skills

Servant Leader Interns completed one short-answer question where they were asked to respond how their life has changed in positive and/or negative ways as a result of their Freedom School experience. Most Interns indicated that their life changes in according to two themes: Growth and Leadership.

Growth. Most Freedom School Interns suggested that experienced significant growth as a result of their experiences at Freedom School. Many Interns indicated that their experiences demonstrated "the power of six weeks...where [they could] make an impact in a child's life in just 6 weeks." Though their time at Freedom School was limited, most indicated that they grew in their capacity to connect with others by listening to the Scholars' stories and learning from diverse backgrounds and experiences.

I have been exposed to traditions and behaviors that I previously wasn't. These new experiences allowed me to connect more. I loved being able to connect with my fellow Interns and grow through our trials. This was my very first experience at Freedom Schools, so that has changed my life itself.

Additionally, most Interns reported that their Freedom School experiences made them feel more confident, emotionally aware, and fulfilled. One Intern suggested that Freedom School “being thrown into new and different can be extremely challenging and extremely rewarding...I experienced a lot emotional growth because of my role as a Servant Leader Intern.” Moreover, one Intern indicated that his or her experience at Freedom School made he or she “physically and mentally stronger...giving a sense of purpose that I have never experienced before.” The Interns did not report any negative life changes that they experienced as a result their experience at Freedom School.

Leadership. The Servant Leader Interns’ life changes can also be characterized by their changes in leadership. Many Interns reported that Freedom School made them a better leader and helped them develop skills to work with people from all walks of life. Some Interns wrote:

My life has changed because I think I am a better leader now because some first year Interns turned to me for help and I was able to guide them.

I am much more open to new experiences and taking leadership.

I have become more confident in my leadership abilities to help others succeed and inspire.

The leadership role as a Servant Leader Intern reportedly instilled a sense of responsibility in some Interns and encouraged them to seek opportunities to evoke change. One Intern wrote, “My life has changed because I now realize how much our children in this world really needs us.”

Similarly, other Interns suggested that they are now more hopeful about the future because they are more hopeful about their ability to create change in their communities and the world.

Appendix

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Level 1 Scholars

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	Mode
Race/Ethnicity	126	--	--	--	--	African American/Black (<i>n</i> =86)
Sex	123	--	--	--	--	Female (<i>n</i> =68)
Age	126	7.16	1.06	5	10	--
Grade in School	128	--	--	--	--	Second Grade (<i>n</i> =51)
Number of Years in Freedom School	124	1.59	.79	1	4	--
Site	129	--	--	--	--	Providence Day School (<i>n</i> =41)

Table 2
Level 1 Scholars' Perceptions of Freedom School Experience, Reading, Agency/Making a Difference

Item	Not True for Me		True for Me	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%
Freedom School Experience				
<i>I enjoyed Freedom School this summer.</i>	11	8.5	117	90.7
<i>I want to do Freedom School again next year.</i>	18	14.0	105	81.4
Reading				
<i>Since being a part of Freedom School I am a better reader.</i>	23	17.8	105	81.4
<i>Since being a part of Freedom School I enjoy reading more.</i>	30	23.3	97	75.2
<i>Since being a part of Freedom School I will spend more time reading.</i>	26	20.2	101	78.3
Agency/Making a Difference				
<i>I want to make a difference in my school and community.</i>	14	10.9	114	88.4

Table 3
Level 1 Scholars' Perceptions of Learning and Education, Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism, Social/Emotional Skills

Item	<i>Not True for Me</i>		<i>True for Me</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Learning & Education				
<i>After my experience with Freedom School this summer, I think I will be a better student next year.</i>	11	8.5	118	91.5
<i>Since being a part of Freedom School I feel more comfortable asking for help from a teacher when I need it.</i>	16	12.4	113	87.6
<i>Since being a part of Freedom School I want to go to college.</i>	14	10.9	113	87.6
Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism				
<i>My future is important to me.</i>	11	8.5	117	90.7
Social/Emotional Skills				
<i>I know how to ask for help when I have to deal with social problems or have a conflict with someone.</i>	14	10.9	113	87.6
<i>I know how to work well with others.</i>	24	18.6	102	79.1

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Level 2-3 Scholars

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	Mode
Race/Ethnicity	271	--	--	--	--	African American/Black (n=170)
Sex	258	--	--	--	--	Female (n=150)
Age	126	10.66	1.50	8	15	--
Freedom School Level	254	--	--	--	--	Level 2 (n=192)
Grade in School	128	--	--	--	--	Fourth Grade (n=71)
Number of Years in Freedom School	124	2.65	1.79	1	9	--
Site	129	--	--	--	--	Grove (n=53)

Table 5
Level 2-3 Scholars' Perceptions of Reading

Item	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>10. Since being at Freedom School I am a better reader.</i>	7	2.5	30	10.8	151	54.1	91	32.6
<i>11. Since being at Freedom School I enjoy reading more.</i>	18	6.5	47	16.8	129	46.2	85	30.5
<i>12. Because I participated in Freedom School I plan on spending more time reading.</i>	20	7.2	72	25.8	126	45.2	59	21.1

Table 6
Level 2-3 Scholars' Perceptions of Agency/Making a Difference and Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism

Item	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
Agency/Making a Difference								
5. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I feel good about who I am.</i>	11	3.9	19	6.8	80	28.7	169	60.6
6. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I am more proud of my race.</i>	5	1.8	18	6.5	110	39.4	146	52.3
7. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I am more proud of my community.</i>	13	4.7	34	12.2	115	41.2	116	41.6
Future Thinking/Goal Setting/Optimism								
9. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I feel better about my future.</i>	5	1.8	20	7.2	101	36.2	152	54.5
10. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I have plans for what I want to do when I am an adult.</i>	11	3.9	34	12.2	83	29.7	151	54.1

Table 7
Level 2-3 Scholars' Perceptions of Learning and Education

Item	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
<i>12. Since being a part of Freedom School I think I will be a better student next year.</i>	6	2.2	19	6.8	109	39.1	145	52.0
<i>13. Since being a part of Freedom School I feel comfortable asking for help from a teacher when I need it.</i>	10	3.6	26	9.3	121	43.4	121	43.4
<i>14. Since being a part of Freedom School I will stay in school and graduate from high school.</i>	2	.7	8	2.9	56	20.1	212	76.0
<i>15. Since being a part of Freedom School I want to go to college.</i>	9	3.2	11	3.9	60	21.5	197	70.6

Table 8
Level 2-3 Scholars' Perceptions of Social/Emotional Skills and Freedom School Experience

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Social/Emotional Skills								
17. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I know how to better resolve conflicts or problems with other students.</i>	17	6.1	37	13.3	137	49.1	85	30.5
18. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I know how to resolve conflicts or problems with adults.</i>	12	4.3	48	17.2	117	41.9	97	34.8
19. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I know how to ask for help in dealing with social problems or conflict with others.</i>	12	4.3	26	9.3	117	41.9	119	42.7
20. <i>Since being a part of Freedom School I know how to work well with others.</i>	8	2.9	27	9.7	116	41.6	122	43.7
Freedom School Experience								
20. <i>I enjoyed Freedom School this summer.</i>	9	3.2	20	7.2	71	25.4	173	62.0
21. <i>I want to do Freedom School again next year.</i>	18	6.5	31	11.1	50	17.9	175	62.7

Table 9
Descriptive Statistics for Freedom School Interns

	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max	Mode
Race/Ethnicity	55	--	--	--	--	African American/Black (n=41)
Sex	55	--	--	--	--	Female (n=49)
Age	53	20.32	1.52	18	25	--
Freedom School Level Served	55	--	--	--	--	Level 1 (n=22)
Educational Status	55	--	--	--	--	Undergraduate (n=46)

Table 10
Freedom School Interns' Perceptions of Freedom School Experience

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>13. I enjoyed my work as a Freedom School Servant Leader Intern this summer.</i>	3	5.5	0	0	19	34.5	33	60
<i>14. I would like to return in the future as a Freedom School Servant Leader Intern.</i>	4	7.3	2	3.6	14	25.5	35	63.6
<i>15. I possess skills that have helped me in my work as a Servant Leader Intern.</i>	2	3.6	1	1.8	14	25.5	38	69.1
<i>16. I have learned new skills as a result of my work as a Servant Leader Intern.</i>	2	3.6	3	5.5	18	32.7	32	58.2
<i>17. I have experienced successes in my work as a Servant Leader Intern.</i>	2	3.6	1	1.8	18	32.7	33	60
<i>18. I have experienced challenges in my work as a Servant Leader Intern.</i>	3	5.5	2	3.6	20	36.4	30	54.5

Table 11
Freedom School Interns' Perceptions of College, Career, and Future Plans

Item	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
9. <i>My plans about my education have changed as a result of my experience as a Freedom School Servant Leader Intern (decision to attend college, change of major or degree, transferring to another college or school).</i>	13	23.6	28	50.9	11	20	3	5.5
10. <i>My plans about my work or career choices have changed as a result of my experience as a Freedom School Servant Leader Intern.</i>	14	25.5	22	40	14	25.5	5	9.1

Table 12
Freedom School Interns' Perceptions of Volunteering, Community Engagement, and Advocacy

Item	Strongly Disagree		Disagree		Agree		Strongly Agree	
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
13. <i>I view myself as a difference maker in my community and world.</i>	1	1.8	0	0	21	38.2	33	60
14. <i>My vision for making a difference has changed or expanded as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	1	1.8	1	1.8	22	40	31	56.4
15. <i>I am more likely to work in my community as a result of my experience with Freedom School.</i>	1	1.8	3	5.5	26	47.3	25	45.5
16. <i>My understanding of education has changed or expanded as a result of my Freedom School Experience.</i>	0	0	1	1.8	30	54.5	22	40
17. <i>My understanding of multiculturalism has changed or expanded as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	1	1.8	4	7.3	23	41.8	26	47.3
18. <i>I am more likely to advocate for children living in poverty as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	2	3.6	1	1.8	16	29.1	36	65.5
19. <i>I am more likely to advocate for families living in poverty as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	2	3.6	1	1.8	18	32.7	34	61.8

Table 13
Freedom School Interns' Perceptions of Agency/Soft Skills

Item	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>		<i>Disagree</i>		<i>Agree</i>		<i>Strongly Agree</i>	
	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>%</i>
23. <i>I have developed or enhanced my leadership skills as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	1	1.8	0	0	15	27.3	39	70.9
24. <i>I am better at working with others as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	1	1.8	2	3.6	19	34.5	33	60
25. <i>I am better able to talk and work with others who are different from me as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	0	0	2	3.6	22	40	30	54.5
26. <i>I am better at adapting to changes that take place (at work, home, social contexts) as a result of my Freedom School experience.</i>	0	0	0	0	17	30.9	38	69.1