

Purdue CDF Freedom School at FUMC: Bringing Together Literacy, Civic Involvement, and Family Engagement

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Board Chair



History of Freedom Schools

- Rooted in the Mississippi Freedom Summer project of 1964.
- Historically and continues to be a part of the Black Community Crusade for Children®.
- Offers engagement through a six-week summer literacy and cultural enrichment program designed to serve children and youth in grades K–12 in communities where quality academic enrichment programming is limited, too expensive, or non-existent.
- By partnering with schools, faith and community-based organizations, municipalities, colleges and universities, and juvenile detention facilities, Freedom Schools are offered in these communities at **no-cost**.

Program Overview

- Offers an intergenerational leadership model.
- Staffed primarily by college students and recent college graduates, with a 10:1 child to adult ratio.
- Children and youth make significant gains in reading achievement and don't experience any summer learning loss.
- Parent empowerment sessions/meetings support the entire family.
- Servant Leader Interns (SLIs) receive pre- and post-training and ongoing professional development.

Program Aims

The *CDF Freedom Schools* program enhances children's **motivation to read** and makes them feel good about learning. At the same time, the program connects families to the right resources in their communities.

CDF Freedom Schools help school-aged scholars engage in a research-based, multicultural Integrated Reading Curriculum that supports them and their families through five essential components:

- High quality academic enrichment
- Parent and family development
- Civic engagement and social action
- Intergenerational servant leadership development
- Nutrition, health, and mental health

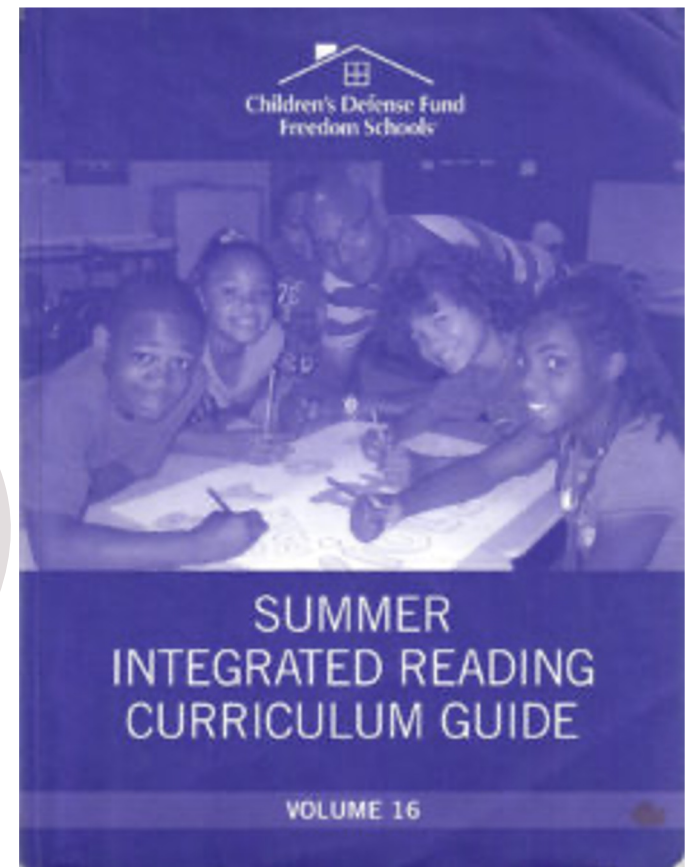
Students receive two nutritious meals and a snack daily, as well as a book each week to build their home libraries.

Integrated Reading Curriculum (IRC)

CDF Freedom Schools® employ the Integrated Reading Curriculum, which uses age-appropriate books under the national theme for CDF Freedom Schools®, "I Can Make A Difference.

The curriculum each week focuses on making a difference in myself, in my family, in my community, in my country, in my world and "with hope, education, and action."

The books are selected by a nationwide panel of educators, family therapists, sociologists and social workers.





A TYPICAL DAY AT FREEDOM SCHOOL

8:00 – 8:30 a.m. Breakfast (provided at no charge)

8:30 – 9:00 am Harambee!

9:00 – 10:30 am Integrated Reading Curriculum (part 1)
(10:30 a.m.-10:45 Morning Break & Snack)

10:45 - 11:45 am Integrated Reading Curriculum (part 2)

11:45 – 12:00 p.m. Drop Everything and Read/DEAR Time

12:00 – 12:30 p.m. Lunch (provided at no charge)

12:30 – 3:00 p.m. Afternoon Activities and Snack (provided at no charge) Examples include:

- *S.T.E.M*
- *Hip-hop poetry*
- *Field trips*
- *Dance*
- *Vocal music/music appreciation*
- *Craft-making/visual arts*
- *Black History competitions/Juneteenth Celebration/Social Action Activities*

3:00 – 3:30 p.m. Wrap-up and dismissal

Purdue CDF Freedom School at FUMC

- Represents a unique partnership between Purdue's College of Education and First United Methodist Church of West Lafayette since 2023.
- Dr. Breanya Hogue (Asst. Prof in Curriculum & Instruction) and Pastor Duane Carlisle serve as Executive Co-Directors.
- Supports up to 60 scholars in K-8 from across Greater Lafayette schools.
- Includes graduate and undergraduate student staff (2 administrative roles plus 8 SLIs), many of whom are pre-service teachers.
- 70.9% qualified for free or reduced lunches in 2025 and 42% in 2026.
- Attracts diverse students, families, and staff.
- Incorporates strong parent engagement and parent empowerment resources.

Freedom School 2027 Program Dates

- **Spring 2027, various dates:** onsite training and preparation for SLIs
- **June 2 – 5:** National Training in Knoxville TN, Ella Baker Child Policy Training Institute for Site Coordinators, Servant Leader Interns, and a Parent Advocate (Transportation, hotel, food are covered)
- **June 7 – 11:** various dates and times at FUMC for local pre- & post- training and classroom set up
- **June 14 – July 23:** Program in session from Monday to Friday, 8:00a.m. - 3:00 p.m., with extended hours until 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays for parent empowerment meetings. The program is closed on July 2.

2026 Program Demographics

- 59 scholars in K-8 from Greater Lafayette schools participated last year.
- 42% qualified for free or reduced lunches and 24% declined to answer.
- Racial/ethnic representation included:
 - 17 Asian American
 - 1 Asian and White/Multiple Races
 - 24 Black or African American
 - 3 Black or African American and White/Multiple Races
 - 1 Native American Indian or Alaska Native and Black or African American/Multiple Races
 - 2 Black or African American and Hispanic or Latino/Multiple Races
 - 2 Hispanic or Latino and White Multiple Races
 - 9 White
- Some students were English Language Learners.

Program Benefits

- Scholars
 - maintain or improve reading levels and avoid summer learning loss.
 - learn about and engage in social action.
 - receive exposure to a Civil Rights-focused pedagogy taught by diverse teachers and staff.
 - participate in afternoon STEM, art, fitness, and outdoor activities with the possibility of field trips.
- The program is **free of charge** and offers small student to teacher ratios.
- The entire family receives support through weekly empowerment meetings that provide workshops and connection to resources.
- Servant Leader Interns gain valuable professional development.
- Our local Freedom School site has generated valuable educational research.

National Day of Social Action

- Provides opportunities for civic engagement on national issues.
- Includes an annual theme for all Freedom Schools. The 2026 theme focused on student mental health. The 2027 theme is TBA.
- Our local site includes a Community Rally for parents, scholars, and anyone who wants to participate.

Purdue CDF Freedom School at First Church

NATIONAL DAY OF SOCIAL ACTION

"Education for Civic Life & Work"
— Hear from local leaders and changemakers about the role of education in shaping our community's future.

JULY 23RD 2025

1:30 PM - 4:00 PM

location:

1700 Mitch Daniels Blvd. West Lafayette IN 47906



THIS YEAR'S THEME:

- Education as a Right, Not a Privilege
- Come be inspired. Get informed. Take action.
- All are welcome. Let's build a better future—together!



- Community Rally to Follow
- Raise your voice. Stand for change. March for equity in education!





Research and Professional Development

- Many Servant Leader Interns (SLIs) are pre-service teachers who gain valuable classroom experience. Those outside of education majors still benefit.
- In 2025 and 2026, a grant supported 3-4 teaching fellows from West Lafayette Community School Corporation.
- In 2026, faculty and graduate students in Purdue's Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences department conducted assessments as part of a collaborative research project.
- Assessments conducted by the Children's Defense Fund have demonstrated that our site maintains or increases reading levels; provides valuable professional development for SLIs; and increases parent and community engagement.
- Dr. Breanya Hogue's published research has explored Freedom Schools' role in training pre-service teachers in culturally-competent curricula, faith-based partnerships, multimodal literacy practices, and family engagement.

Anticipated Attendance Costs

Estimated at \$118,300 total or \$1971.67 per student (equivalent to or less than local summer programs):

- Staffing: \$75,000
- Meals and snacks: \$8,000
- Curriculum and Program Fee (including National Training Registration): \$305 per child (\$18,300 for 60 scholars)
- National Training Travel and Lodging: \$3000
- Supplies and Miscellaneous Expenses (field trips, speaker stipends, etc.): \$10,000
- Classroom Set Up: \$3000
- Cooking Matters program fee: \$1,000 (includes curriculum and meal supplies)

Sustainability and Funding Challenges

- We rely primarily on grants and donations.
- Funding has only covered individual summers without sustainable, recurring dedicated sources of funding or endowments.
- Opportunities have decreased due to state and federal laws, a backlash against DEI, and the worsening economy.
- The federal Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps provide breakfast and lunch, but it not always guaranteed.
- Community organizations are competing for the same sources of funding.
- Purdue offers some support but nothing sustainable or guaranteed. FUMC provides space and utilities and covered costs not funded by grants in 2026.
- Sources like the United Way have indicated that 2025 was the last year to receive awards. We have been denied by other national and community sources but will continue to apply.

Future Plans and Sustainability Efforts

- Increase capacity to 70 scholars in 2027.
- Seek additional/new sources of funding and community partnerships.
- Continue development of Advisory Board and its functions.
- Promote the Purdue CDF Freedom School at FUMC in the community to increase visibility and awareness.
- Publish additional data and generate new research opportunities.
- Offer an afterschool component to extend year-round engagement of current and future Freedom School scholars and families.
- Develop new Freedom School sites in Indiana based on the Greater Lafayette site.

Ways to Get Involved

- Donate time
 - for the morning Read Aloud.
 - for the National Day of Social Action on July 21, 2027.
- Donate expertise to offer an afternoon activity for the scholars.
- Donate funding to help us pay for this upcoming summers.
- Donate school supplies during our annual giveaway at the Freedom School Finale.
- Serve on the Advisory Board.
- Help us connect with community partners and organizations willing to provide grants and/or collaborate on programming.

Contact or Follow Us

Purdue Freedom School Website:

<https://education.purdue.edu/cl2ear/research-initiatives/purdue-cdf-freedom-school-program/>

IG: @purduefreedomfumc

FB: Purdue Freedom School at First Church

purduefreedomschools@purdue.edu



**DONATE TO SUPPORT
OUR PROGRAM!**



Please select
"Freedom School."

