September 12, 1964

Norma Becker and Sandra Adickes

#1. How was your summer. Sorry I didn't see you before you left.
I've been meaning to write to you for some time to outline another
plan for the UFT, but I've been slow to do it. If you think this
is feasible, please reply.

We're faced statewide with school boycotts. The idea has caught on
like wildfire with the Freedom School students. Furthermore, the
lawyers are planning more school desegregation suits in more school
districts. Between all these pressures it seems likely that at least
one school district will close down rather than desegregate. And
at least some of the students will feel that a one-day school boy-
cott is not enough, and launch a protracted boycott. If either of
these situations should occur, we feel that the Freedom School pro-
gram should try to meet it in as responsible and comprehensive a
fashion as we possibly can. This means that if the schools should
close for whatever reason, the Freedom Schools should try to provide
parallel education for the duration. We already tried this in Shaw
when they closed the schools for a few days. I think that with
adequate preparation we could probably meet this challenge(provided
it did not happen all over the state of course). This is my plan:

Could you, still working with the UFT Human Rights Committee, organize
standby teachers? I'm sure that we could rally churches, homes, etc.
in a community for extra Freedom Schools, and we could get money from
outside to support the emergency Freedom Schools, but teachers do not
seem to emerge from air, even in crises. At least not enough of them.
If, however, we could have teachers outside the state who were committed
to come for an emergency period (a few days to possibly months), we
could plan definitely on Freedom School education to bridge the gap.
Naturally, we could make more specific plans when we saw a dangerous
situation brewing. But we would need to count on teachers who could
augment the regular Freedom School staff. I'm sure that there are
teachers like the UFT teachers who came during the summer who are
not teaching. Do you think you could find teachers who are retired,
or substitute teachers, or even striking teachers who would go to
Mississippi if they were needed? As of now it seems that the Leake
County schools will not close (the parents were intimidated from even
trying to send their children to the white schools), but we will not
know what the school board plans for the Shaw school until it reopens
in October. If the administration tries to punish the students who
led the wildcat boycott in August, the students are already
committed to walk out. That remains our only sore spot right now.
The statewide one-day boycott will probably come in November or early
December. There may be extreme reaction to that in some places.

Please excuse the wandering thoughts; I'm just writing down this stuff as it comes to me. If you would like a better-written request from either Liz or me, to present formally, just ask and we'll send something better. I hope you get the idea, though.

The second thing is this: I've been reading about the stuff the American Federation of Teachers did at its summer convention-- election of Negro officials, especially gton the Human Rights or whatever committee, and resolutions recommending that teachers involve themselves with the civil rights movement. Could you help us get some good contacts with that group, so that we could possibly develop a relationship something like what we have with the UFT? We would like to have all theteachers rolling. Same with the NEA if possible, but I'm not planning to hold my breath until that day comes.

Things are all tore up right now, but I hope they'll shape up by October. Incidentally, Dick Jewett says that the fall recruitment by CORE is not catching on--applications are very sparse. We're DESPERATE for longterm community center and freedom school workers as well and the emergency squads. Tell all your friends who could come for a minimum of 2 months. Please. Thanks.

Yours truly

Lois Chaffee