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During December/January 1963-64, fifty years ago, in the Mississippi Theater of the Civil Rights Movement, SNCC field secretaries in Hattiesburg made plans for the summer project history enshrines as “Freedom Summer.” That theater of that movement not only illustrates the long-term historical nature of our struggle, it clarifies critical constitutional fault lines across which it is waged.

A handful of SNCC field secretaries led the call to energize hundreds of college students to engage Freedom Summer, a powerful demonstration of the Preamble (that “We The People” dimension of our national Constitution). Aligned in battle against us, the “Sovereign” State of Mississippi, had effectively silenced and/or sidelined internal opposition to “White Supremacy.” That doctrine, enabled by National Party Politics and Supreme Court decisions, allocates to each State the Right to preside over distribution among citizens of civil rights.

The struggle across these constitutional fault lines sets the constitutional background against which the work of the Algebra Project and the Young People’s Project (AP/YPP) unfolds. Its “We The People” dimension now focused on school age young people and their constitutional right to a quality public school education. Its “White Supremacy” dimension ever-clothed in Supreme Court “States Rights” decisions and National Party Politics, allocates to each State the Right to preside over distribution among school children of education excellence.

With plans underway to honor Freedom Summer with a “Ballot Initiative” that enshrines quality public school education into Mississippi’s constitution, the Algebra Project and the Young People’s Project drumbeat approaches a “We The People” vibration.

The Algebra Project’s demand-side work with bottom quartile students, parallels SNCC’s efforts to encourage sharecropper-demand for voting rights. The transition from industrial to Information economies sets the technological background against which the “We The People” and the “White Supremacy/State’s Rights” constitutional battles are waged. A transition period which puts Wednesday-Morning-School-Algebra into unlikely play as the organizing tool for the “We the People” dimension of this constitutional struggle for quality public school education.

To all of you who stay the course, sustaining and supporting us in this struggle we offer a few stories from AP’s front lines.

**Conference takes stock of  
 “Math Cohort High Schools”**

On July 19-21, 2013, the Algebra Project held a two-day Discovery Research K-12 award wrap up meeting to draw lessons learned and brainstorm next steps for the Math Cohorts, followed by a two-day conference with additional organizations, schools and scholars, to brainstorm the implications of this work and possible future directions. This meeting, “Math Cohort High Schools: Harnessing the Language and

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**Mansfield Algebra Project growing, showing results**

*Excerpted from Richland Source, By Mindy McKenzie, originally posted Sept. 17, 2013*

“The Algebra Project changed everything about teaching math to students because it really pulls on the kid’s knowledge and allows them to engage much more in the classroom,” said Amy Bradley, second grade teacher of Mansfield City Schools, in Mansfield, OH.

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## Interns energize and attend to project mission IN THE THREE STORIES THAT FOLLOW, SUMMER 2013 INTERNS REFLECT ON THEIR EXPERIENCES, AND PAVE THE WAY FOR MORE TO ENGAGE IN SUMMER 2014 AND BEYOND.

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### Todd Christensen

*Algebra Project national office*

I will keep this note short and sweet. I wanted to express my deep gratitude for allowing me to be a part of your organization this summer. I first became acquainted with the Algebra Project through readings at SUNY-Geneseo (with Civil Rights History Professor Emilye Crosby), and became fascinated with both the basic premises of the organization and its pedagogy and methods of organizing.

I wanted to see, first hand, the spadework necessary in sustaining a long-term, successful, non-profit organization like the Algebra Project. In Bill Crombie's words, I wanted to see "how the sausage is made."

You made this desire a reality, and for that I am very grateful. You fully absorbed me into the workspace and allowed me to be a productive member of the team. So much so, that I don't want this parting to be my last association with the Algebra Project.

I wish to continue to help in any capacity that I can. Thank you again for allowing me to become a member of your organization, and more importantly, thank you for the remarkable work you have been doing for the last 30 years. My brief glance at the backend of the organization has only deepened this appreciation. Thank you very much for this opportunity.

*Todd Christensen is a junior at SUNY-Geneseo.*

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### Neil Cholli

*Miami Algebra Project*

Through its grassroots efforts, the Algebra Project seeks to work with one school system at a time to empower inner-city, rural, minority and poor students to continue pursuing education—especially in math and the sciences—and, thereby, become truly equal and meaningful American citizens in today's information- and technological-oriented economy.

The Algebra Project Summer Program in Miami, FL, spanned about six weeks (I began my work at the high school at the beginning of the third week) and it was structured in a unique way. There were two sessions: a morning session and an afternoon session. The morning session, which ran from 9am to 10:30am, was dedicated to prepare about five Math Literacy Workers (MLWs) for the day's work ahead. These MLWs were chosen from the class and were assigned to serve as peer mentors for the other students. Then came the afternoon session—the main class, with both the MLWs and other students, from 11am to 1:30pm.

Bob Moses led the class as the main teacher, and I helped as a teaching assistant. Each weekday, I would teach, review, explain, clarify, and, at the right moments, motivate the students to try harder. After class, I would talk briefly with Bob about the students' performance in class and the plan for the next day's class, and sometimes help prepare some charts. I was given additional duties, including creating online practice test simulations for the students, typing a summary of the main concepts of the Summer Program, and calling families to recruit younger students for the Algebra Project.

I began to really notice how each individual student had a distinct personality and, thus, unique needs. One MLW, for example, could easily understand concepts and answer questions; however, he seemed to focus more on socializing with his classmates than on the class work. On the other hand, another MLW, who was partially hearing-impaired, was very independent from her other classmates. Although she could not grasp some concepts very easily, she would continue to faithfully finish assignments with me through every breakfast break. It was hard to believe that all of these students, with such different learning styles and needs, would have all been taught the same exact way in a traditional classroom setting.

Often, I would hear Bob say, "Math is another language. And just like a language, the students need to practice using it in order to truly own it." From these words, I understood the power of practice and time. I couldn't force them to always remain focused. I couldn't expect these teens to change their behavior or perspective over a span of just a few days when they had been sculpted as they are now over so many years. I could only provide guidance of how to progress. In order to truly empower these students, students must gain a sense of responsibility for themselves and take initiative by them-

selves. As Dr. Joannie Wynne, a graduate professor of Urban Education at Florida International University who worked closely with the Algebra Project, told me, "These kids have been kicked to the curb all of their lives. So many teachers and adults in their lives have given up on them. And now they are looking at you and testing you to see if you are going to give up on them as well. But once you show that you're still there, every day, willing to help them, then they start to believe that you are really there for them and to help them succeed. And then they will change and succeed."

*Neil Cholli is a sophomore at University of Pennsylvania*

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### Rachel E. Wittenberg

*Algebra Project national office*

I expressed interest in becoming involved with the Algebra Project after reading [Radical Equations-Civil Rights from Mississippi to the Algebra Project](#) (Moses & Cobb, Beacon Press 2001), which opened my eyes to the inequities of the public school education system and made me want to play some role in creating positive change.

After beginning to work in the office, I was consistently amazed and moved by the ways in which the Algebra Project's values and organizing methods are infused into the work it does every day. The conference, "Math Cohort High Schools: Harnessing the Language and Culture of Students," co-hosted by the Algebra Project, the Young People's Project, and Educational Testing Service in July was one of my first experiences, and offered a powerful introduction to the ways in which the Project functions and the vast network of people with whom they collaborate.

On the way to the ETS conference center from the airport, I shared a car with Marcus Hung, a teacher from San Francisco who had switched schools because he felt so strongly about having the administrative support necessary to use Algebra Project pedagogy and materials in his classroom. I was really impressed by Marcus; he is an excellent example of the Algebra Project's greatest strength: its vast network of extraordinarily dedicated teachers, administrators, mathematicians, and community organizers. Similarly, seeing so many of the members of the Algebra Project network from around the country convened in the same room and grappling with the same challenges, problems, and setbacks was compelling.

When I think about what it has meant to intern for the Algebra Project this summer, something Marcus said to me comes to mind. He said that the question of "What is the Algebra Project?" is a very difficult question to answer, but is so important to thinking about the values and the work the Project does and, from a teacher's perspective, how you want to work with the kids in your classroom. Thanks to the mentorship of Ben Moynihan and all of the folks at the Algebra Project, I think that I have at least a little bit better of a sense of "what" the Algebra Project really is.

I enjoyed being a part of the day-to-day operations of the Algebra Project national office this summer, including working on the content and design for the new website, fielding calls and emails from people interested in learning more about the Project or requesting

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## Forthcoming Events:

### JANUARY 16TH 2014 / THURSDAY

Northeastern University, Boston, MA, Martin L. King, Jr. keynote speech by Bob Moses.

### JANUARY 20-21, 2014 / MONDAY / TUESDAY

University of Michigan School of Education, Ann Arbor, MI, workshop with teachers, by Bob Moses.

### JANUARY 23, 2014 / THURSDAY

Adams State University, Alamosa, CO, Martin L. King, Jr. keynote speech by Bob Moses.

### FEBRUARY 5, 2014 / WEDNESDAY

Smithsonian Institute Youth Summit, Jackson, MS, Bob Moses will be panelist.

### FEBRUARY 13-14, 2014 / THURSDAY / FRIDAY

Wagner College, Staten Island, NY, keynote speech by Bob Moses.

### FEBRUARY 15, 2014 / SATURDAY

Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, lecture by Bob Moses.

### FEBRUARY 26, 2014 / WEDNESDAY

University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, Bob Moses to be interviewed by Douglas Blackmon, for Blackmon's PBS radio program, "American Forum,"

### MARCH 4, 2014 / TUESDAY

Hattiesburg Convention Commission and the Center for Black Studies at the University of Southern Mississippi, Hattiesburg, MS, "Freedom Summer Dialogues," Bob Moses, speaker.

### MARCH 26, 2014 / WEDNESDAY

University of New England, Biddeford, ME, guest lecture by Bob Moses.

### APRIL 8, 2014 / TUESDAY

National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, annual conference, New Orleans, LA, Invited Research Symposium by Bob Moses and Algebra Project.

### APRIL 10-11, 2014 / THURSDAY / FRIDAY

College of Charleston, Charleston, SC, Quality Education as a Constitutional Right workshop and speech.

### JUNE 25-29, 2014 / WEDNESDAY THRU SUNDAY

Mississippi Freedom Summer 1964 50th Anniversary Conference, Jackson, MS, Tougaloo College, to include education workshops on quality public school education as a constitutional right.

**"Moving Beyond"** Benefit Fosters Policy Debate  
On Wednesday, November 6th, a benefit for the Algebra Project, "Moving Beyond the Achievement Gap-Establishing a Universal Right to Vote and Quality Public School Education as a Constitutional Right," was held with Taylor Branch and Bob Moses at Busboys & Poets, in Washington, DC, co-sponsored by Busboys & Poets, Teaching for Change, the Young People's Project and the Algebra Project.



Photo: Taylor Branch, with Albert Sykes (YPP), B.J. Walker and Bob Moses (AP)

## Recent Press

"On the 50th anniversary of the March on Washington and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech, three civil rights experts consider the issues he would raise in 2013." **Parade Magazine**, "What Would Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Say Today?," Sunday, August 24, 2013, <http://www.parade.com/66509/billhewitt/what-would-rev-dr-martin-luther-king-jr-say-today/>

NPR Morning Edition profile of Bob Moses and the Algebra Project at Northwestern High School in Miami, FL. **National Public Radio-Morning Edition**, "To '60s Civil Rights Hero, Math Is Kids' Formula For Success," by Christopher Connelly and Marisa Peñaloza, August 01, 2013, <http://www.npr.org/blogs/codeswitch/2013/08/02/206813091/to-60s-civil-rights-hero-math-is-kids-formula-for-success>



## NSF supplement supports collaboration with ETS Cognitive Scientists

Cognitive Scientists from Educational Testing Service will aid development of a Logic Model/Theory of Action for teaching and learning in the Algebra Project. The goal is to develop a theory of action and logic model that reflects the successful teaching and learning with the instructional materials that the project has used during the National Science Foundation's DRK-12 award to prepare low performing high students to graduate on time and be ready to take college mathematics courses for credit. This model can also guide future research and product development. Development of a report/paper for submission to mathematics education and education policy journals would provide an important contribution to the literature on working with students who have not been reached with current approaches. The NSF is providing a \$45,000 supplemental award for this effort.

*"Conference takes stock of Math Cohorts High Schools" continued...*

Culture of Students," was co-hosted by Educational Testing Service (ETS), the Algebra Project, and the Young People's Project at ETS' Chauncey Conference Center in Princeton, NJ. Over 90 educators, including students, teachers, administrators, ETS researchers, university faculty, and community organizers attended. Teams of Algebra Project Math Cohort teachers and students participated from each National Science Foundation supported site: Los Angeles, CA; Eldorado, IL; Mansfield, OH, and Ypsilanti, MI. Additional representatives attended from Miami, FL; San Francisco, CA; South Bronx, NY, Baltimore, MD; Chicago, IL; and Boston, MA, among others.

The meeting produced numerous suggestions for lessons learned for program development and implementation, as well as for other future initiatives. These include research on how students' language can be used to build mathematics concepts, and teacher preparation programs where Algebra Project classrooms can be sites for pre-service teacher-interns.

## More Recent Press

"Join us for an interview with Bob Moses, founder of the Algebra Project, followed by a discussion with Writing Project directors and teacher-consultants who have been collaborating to focus on students struggling in the bottom quartile. We will discuss what we have been learning about acceleration versus remediation, the development of identity and agency, and the power of focusing together on learners least well served by current systems."

**National Writing Project Radio**, *"Acceleration and Agency in Disciplinary Literacies,"* BlogTalkRadio, December 12, 2013, [http://www.blogtalkradio.com/nwp\\_radio/2013/12/13/acceleration-and-agency-in-disciplinary-literacies](http://www.blogtalkradio.com/nwp_radio/2013/12/13/acceleration-and-agency-in-disciplinary-literacies)

"Bob Moses organized for voting rights during the darkest days of the 1960s South. Today, his fight for civil rights continues, with a project to help inner city kids succeed in the classroom."

**The American Prospect magazine**, *"Moses of Mississippi,"* by Bryce Stucki, August 30, 2013. <http://prospect.org/article/moses-mississippi>

*"Rachel E. Wittenberg" continued...*

Bob as an event speaker, updating the mailing list, organizing the storage room, and helping to draft and edit reports and proposals.

I am grateful not only for the opportunity the project gave me this summer, but also for the work Bob Moses has done since the Mississippi voter registration drives of the sixties and since the Algebra Project's inception in the eighties. I consider myself very fortunate to have worked in the company of remarkable and dedicated people who have had a real impact on improving the public school system and promoting racial and socioeconomic equality. Thank you again for a very worthwhile and inspiring summer. I am really looking forward to keeping in touch.

Rachel Wittenberg is a freshman at the University of Chicago.

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[www.algebra.org](http://www.algebra.org)

*"Mansfield Algebra Project growing, showing results" continued...*

"The Algebra Project began in Mansfield Senior High School after we received a grant in 2008. The Algebra Project, Inc., won a \$4,000,000 National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for work in four sites, including ours. Mansfield was the most undeveloped and smallest of the four sites, but we kind of grew the biggest project in the end. We received two other grants that we worked on locally from The State of Ohio Board of Regents and The Ohio State University," said site director for the Mansfield Algebra Project, Lee McEwan.

Dr. Nell Cobb, an associate professor of math education at DePaul University, specializes in research with the Algebra Project. From her perspective, the growth at Mansfield is noteworthy. "In terms of the Math Cohort project at the high school, Mansfield had the most growth nationwide," she said, "That's success because some of those students were not on the college track and now they are enrolled in college and joining the military."

The growth has not stopped. In fact, the program recently stretched its reach one step further.

"For four years the Algebra Project was strictly in the high school and then in the early part of last year we brought it to grades K-8," said McEwan.

"We will be using the tools of the Algebra Project in grades K-16 and this is very exciting for both Mansfield City Schools and the university," said co-director of the Ohio State University-Mansfield Algebra Project, Dr. Terri Bucci.

Integrating a better understanding of math and science in schools will help prepare students for future success. "It's one of our goals to prepare students for this new world that has such a big focus on math and science. If we aren't connecting the way that we need to then we are not setting them up to participate in that world. We are trying to make a seamless connection between Mansfield City Schools and the university," said Bucci.

Teachers want to allow students to choose a method for problem solving that will best accommodate them. "The kids have more freedom to explore different paths to problem solving and there is less fear of being wrong with justifying their thinking. This has been a huge confidence booster and we are seeing the students feel empowered," said Bradley.

"We are involved in a teacher preparation program here where we can prepare future teachers to be able to teach the Algebra Project. The idea is to teach them from the very beginning," said McEwan. The Algebra Project has been implemented at The Ohio State University-Mansfield. "We are working extremely hard to align the content and the way we teach the courses with the way we want them to teach," said McEwan. As the program moves forward, the future is not without challenges, but also has even higher aspirations. "We are looking towards growth, but funding is an issue. It is difficult to get resources," said McEwan. "The next big thing we are working on is to build a center at The Ohio State University-Mansfield that would coordinate all of the activities and would have some administrative help," said McEwan, "We want to expand the Algebra Project beyond Mansfield City Schools in the future, but it will take time."