**Section 269.50 Program Specifications**

a) Each grantee must operate, at a minimum, *a 6-week summer program* or a program during the school year that provides out-of-school learning opportunities, which may include before-school, after-school, or weekend programming. The mission of those programs is to *improve the odds for children living in poverty*. The programs must use a *research-based and multicultural curriculum for disenfranchised communities most affected by the opportunity gap and learning loss caused by the pandemic,* and, *by expanding the teaching of African American history*, must develop *leadership skills* and provide *an understanding of the tenets of the civil rights movement*. [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(b)]

b) *The teachers* in the programs established under subsection (a) *must be from the* grantee’s *local community, with an emphasis on historically disadvantaged youth, including African American students and other students of color, so that those individuals have access to summer jobs and teaching experiences that serve as a long-term pipeline to educational careers and the hiring of minority educators in public schools, are elevated as content experts and community leaders, and are able to provide students with access to both mentorship and equitable educational resources*. [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(b)]

c) Each grantee must employ strategies that focus on all of the following:

1) *racial justice and equity;*

2) *transparency and building trusting relationships;*

3) *self-determination and governance;*

4) *building on community strengths and community wisdom;*

5) *utilizing current data, best practices, and evidence;*

6) *shared leadership and collaboration;*

7) *a reflective learning culture;*

8) *a whole-child approach to education; and*

9) *literacy.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(c)]

d) Each grantee must *strive for authentic parent and community engagement during the development of Freedom School programs and their curriculum. Authentic parent and community engagement includes all of the following:*

1) *a shared responsibility that values equal partnerships between families and professionals;*

2) an assurance *that students and families who are directly impacted by Freedom School policies and practices are the decision-makers in the creation, design, implementation, and assessment of those policies and practices;*

3) *genuine respect for the culture and diversity of families; and*

4) *relationships that center around the goal of supporting family well-being and learning.* [105 ILCS 5/2-3.186(d)]

e) Students participating in Freedom School programs must participate in pre-assessments and post-assessments of literacy and other program objectives.