
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: IHL REQUEST FOR LETTER FROM YOU IN BROCHURE
DATE 1/21/01
CC: BOYD
SIMMONS

Dane Linn, NGA's Education Policy Studies Director, met with members of the Senior Staff and myself in December to discuss the possibility of NGA conducting an evaluation of Mississippi's education program similar to the evaluation NGA conducted in Indiana. NGA, the National Association of State Boards of Education and a private accounting firm formed a consortium to conduct the nine-month evaluation of Indiana's K-12 education system required under P.L. 221 (1999).

The NGA review consisted of the following five components:

1. All activities were overseen by an Advisory Board comprised of a broad group of stakeholders who provided feedback and input on all project activities, instrumentation and findings.
2. The consortium conducted approximately 19 one-day sessions to identify the programmatic goals of Indiana's education system and the alignment of those goals with policies and programs.
3. The consortium collected data on existing programs and services through interviews with top-level state officials.
4. The consortium also collected data through a series of five regional focus groups.
5. Finally, the consortium collected data by conducting a broad-based survey sent out to a larger sample of stakeholders.

NGA's evaluation included the following elements:

1. analysis of state program and policy alignment with state education goals, including impact of governance structures on alignment
2. determination of program and policy coherence and results
3. analysis of funding compared to outcomes
4. recommendations for improvement

Linn made the following points:

- The review, which is to be released this month and is not expected to be favorable of the existing structure, is a very political issue in Indiana. The State elected Superintendent of Education chairs the State Board of Education, which is comprised of 10 members appointed by the Governor.

- Indiana paid approximately \$535,000 for the review, but 50% of this went to the private accounting firm which would not be necessary if the Department of Education has strong, historical fiscal information. Linn said that a similar study in Mississippi would probably cost around \$250,000.
- The Indiana review covered K-12, but Linn suggested that an effective review should encompass higher education and should be K-16. It would be important to establish a clear framework for the review and for this framework to be thoroughly explained to MDE, State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and IHL.
- Such a review should also take a close look at teacher quality and licensure.

Please advise as to if you wish to consider conducting such a review in Mississippi or if you would like additional information. Linn suggested that NGA would need to know of any interest for a Mississippi review by the end of this month or mid-February and that NGA could assist in developing a scope of service for such a review.