

## MEMO

TO: J.C. Burns, Executive Director, DECD  
FROM: Kelly Riley, Policy Liaison  
DATE: June 6, 2000  
SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant

I am coordinating Mississippi's Teacher Quality Enhancement grant application on behalf of the Governor's Office. The grants seek to promote statewide teacher education reform activities through the linkage of K-12 and higher education institutions and systemic policy and practice changes.

Mississippi's Teacher Quality Enhancement grant has four goals:

1. Involve all stakeholders in developing a seamless K-16 system that supports growth in student achievement across the state.
2. Develop and implement state policies that strengthen licensing standards.
3. Develop and implement state policies and programs that increase the number of qualified teachers entering the field.
4. Develop policies, clear standards and programs that ensure retention of qualified teachers.

The workgroup (comprised of representatives of the Department of Education, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, the Institutions of Higher Learning, and the Public Education Forum) has requested that you write a letter of support for the grant regarding its effect on our empowerment zones and enterprise communities. In the event of a tie among two or more states' grants for the last available grant award, the U.S. Department of Education will select the applicant whose activities will focus on schools in an empowerment zone or enterprise community.

I have attached a rough draft for your reference in developing your letter of support. Please address your letter of support to Governor Musgrove, but address the envelope in which you deliver your letter of support to me. We will be mailing the grant proposal this Friday, June 9, so **I need to receive your letter of support by 5:00 p.m., Thursday, June 8.**

Please contact me at 359-2528 if you have any questions. Thank you for your assistance.

June 6, 2000

Honorable Ronnie Musgrove, Governor  
State of Mississippi  
P.O. Box 139  
Jackson, MS 39205-0139

Dear Governor Musgrove:

Please accept this letter in support of Mississippi's Teacher Quality Enhancement Project. The Department of Economic and Community Development recognizes the impact that qualified and prepared teachers have on our students and our schools, and, in turn, the economic environment and future of Mississippi. This grant will allow Mississippi's educational leaders to strengthen their statewide effort to prepare, retain and support Mississippi's teachers and to develop a seamless K-16 educational system for our state that supports our students' achievement.

This grant will strive in a number of ways to increase the number and diversity of qualified applicants to teacher education programs, including targeting potential teacher education students from those critical teacher shortage areas. The Mississippi Teacher Center will also work with the Mississippi Employment Securities Commission to market the teaching profession to qualified job applicants. The Teacher Center will place special emphasis on increasing the number of qualified teachers applying to Mississippi's high-need local education agencies (LEAs), many of which are located in the Mississippi Delta Empowerment Zone and the North Delta Mississippi Enterprise Community. Providing a quality education to the children in these areas is critical to the areas' economic revitalization.

The Mississippi Department of Economic Development is pleased to support Mississippi's Teacher Quality Enhancement Project and I urge the selection committee to give it serious consideration.

Very truly yours,

J.C. Burns  
Executive Director