

## MEMO

TO: Governor  
FROM: Riley  
SUBJECT: DRA's Teacher Initiative  
DATE: March 31, 2003  
COPY: Tell

I recently met with Bill Triplett of the DRA staff and Dr. Peter Cookson of Teachers' College at Columbia University. Triplett had requested the meeting to inform me of a DRA educational initiative.

According to Triplett, DRA is seeking a federal appropriation to conduct a teacher mentoring/drop-out prevention program that Cookson is offering. Triplett said that DRA is concerned as to the drop-out rate for new teachers being higher than that of high school students. If DRA is successful in obtaining federal funds for this program, Triplett said plans are to operate 6 sites in 3 states (AL, AR and MS). He said that no state funds will be required. DRA anticipates the 3-year program will run in the low 7 figures. DRA has also received a Kellogg grant to fund an evaluation piece of the initiative.

Programmatic activities will concentrate on teachers and principals and will emphasize the importance of reading and also leadership development. Cohort groups at each of the 6 sites will make a year-long commitment and could meet as often as every 2 weeks. The initiative will include a "Lesson launcher" web site which can be available to all teachers in the 3 states or to just the cohort groups.

I asked Triplett what he needed from us and he said that he didn't need anything, rather he just wanted to make sure that the DRA governors are aware of the initiative and support it. I asked him if the initiative would be approved at an upcoming DRA meeting and he said that it was actually approved at a recent meeting as a part of the 2003 work plan.

I have additional materials on the initiative if you would like to see them. Support for our new teachers is important and MDE has sought funding for the legislatively mandated mentoring program. However, I think DRA members need to closely monitor this initiative as to activities and operations.

As you can see, I've copied Armerita on this memo. Please advise as to if you require additional info or if you have any specific questions you'd like answered.