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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** NAGB MEETING BOOK AND AGENDA ITEMS  
**DATE** 5/10/01  
**CC:** FILE

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I've reviewed the NAGB meeting book for this weekend's meeting and here are some points of interest for you.

- Secretary of Education Paige is scheduled to speak at 9:00 Friday morning on "No Child Left Behind."

In addition to "No Child Left Behind," NGA has the following concerns regarding the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA).

1. The general overall structure of the bill is to provide funding to state and local education entities while holding states accountable for performance.
  2. Given that states are going to be held accountable, the bill should be amended to require that all state education plans which are submitted to the federal government be jointly signed by the State Education Agency and the Governor.
  3. Legislative action should be taken to ensure that the bill preserves state and local authority for realistic and practical accountability systems. The federal government should not create new accountability systems, but should utilize and build upon the existing systems in states. As you know, Mississippi is implementing its new accountability and assessment system.
  4. The federal government should also provide and ensure adequate funding of new accountability provisions, including full funding for the new testing requirements and a yearly appropriation to cover the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).
- Committee on Standards, Design and Methodology (10:15 Friday)  
Your work committee will receive an update, take action on a technical sampling issue and discuss future activities. As to the technical sampling issue that you will vote on, it appears from the meeting materials that the question is whether to test a maximum of 120 students in grade 4 schools or adopt a proposed Westat procedure which is based upon a percentage, would test all students in a schools if the NAEP sample is greater than 75% the total number of 4<sup>th</sup> graders and is more generalizable than that approved by NAGB. I think we should ask Mark Musick his opinion on this matter before you go into your work committee.

- Reflections of Past and Present NAGB Chairs (3:00 Friday)

Dr. Richard Boyd will speak during this session. Your meeting book contains a paper by Dr. Boyd, but it appears as if the back pages did not copy, so you don't have the complete paper. A few points from his paper, which discusses the Council of the Great City Schools' (CGCS) proposal that calls for a trial NAEP assessment of large urban school districts:

1. At a 1984 meeting of the Chief State School Officers, Chiefs from the Deep South States were nearly unanimous in their opposition of state-by-state assessment. They did so because they knew of the strong correlation between student poverty and achievement, their states had high poverty, and they didn't need more negative PR as to how poorly their students performed on assessments.
2. Boyd questions if Deep South states are deficient in their instructional practices or is something else in play and contributing to the poor results. He specifically mentions at the bottom of p. 2 of his paper, MDE's efforts and the teacher training that has taken place to improve reading levels of children in Mississippi, but the scores are still low. Boyd commends the CGCS for wanting to improve their schools, but questions their decision for a NAEP assessment because he's not sure it will provide the schools with the information that they need. He concludes by saying that poverty and socio-economic conditions should be reviewed by administrators as an explanation, not an excuse, for low student achievement.

- Third International Math and Science Study (4:15 Friday – Info Presentation)

Our office received an executive summary of this study and I have included it in the back pocket of your meeting book. NAGB also provided summary materials under the second yellow tab. A few highlights of the study:

1. This 1999 study is a follow up to a 1995 study and focuses on math and science achievement of 8<sup>th</sup> graders in 38 countries.
2. U.S. participants included 13 states and 14 school districts.
3. In math, U.S. 8<sup>th</sup> graders exceeded the international average, but were close to the middle of the distribution.
4. In science, the U.S. was higher than the international average, but close to the middle of the distribution.
5. There was no change in U.S. achievement in math or science between 1995 and 1999. But, U.S. black 8<sup>th</sup> graders showed an increase in math over the 4 years (see p. 4 of executive summary in back pocket).
6. The top-achieving jurisdictions had high percentages of 8<sup>th</sup> graders from well-resourced homes.
7. U.S. 8<sup>th</sup> graders have more hours of instructional time in math and science than do students internationally.