

January 27, 2003

The Honorable Bob Riley
Governor of Alabama
State Capitol
Montgomery, Alabama 36130-2751

Dear Governor Riley:

As Chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board, I want to welcome you to membership on the Board. As Governor, you are a member of the Board of America's first compact for education. SREB is an interstate organization focused on state education issues, so your work in Congress may not have brought you into direct contact with our staff or programs. SREB was established by action of Southern governors and legislatures over fifty years ago. Alabama was among the original signers of the Southern Regional Education Compact that includes 16 states. In some ways the aim then and now is simple. SREB enables Southern states to work together to pool their resources and accomplish together what they cannot do alone. More recently, for example, Alabama colleges and universities joined with more than 300 public and independent colleges and universities to form SREB's *Electronic Campus*, the nation's largest higher education electronic marketplace, with 8000 courses and 250 degree programs available on-line.

As Governor, you serve *ex officio* as one of Alabama's five representatives on the Board. Other Alabama members and term completion dates are: Dr. Paul R. Hubbert (2003), Superintendent Ed Richardson (2004), Representative H. Mac Gipson, Jr. (2005) and Charlie Waldrep (2006). Each year on June 30 a term on the Board expires, and you will have the opportunity to reappoint that person or you may appoint someone else to the term. The only stipulation is that the SREB Compact requires that each state must have at least one educator and one legislator in its representation on the Board.

Representative Mac Gipson serves on SREB's Legislative Advisory Council for a specified term by virtue of being a legislative member of the Board. Senator Larry Dixon and Senator Vivian Figures Davis serve on the Council as gubernatorial appointees and do not serve a specified term. The Council advises the Board on legislative matters and serves as a permanent steering committee for SREB's Annual Legislative Work Conference at which legislators and educators meet to discuss matters of mutual interest. Legislators who serve on the Council value their membership for the information and perspectives they receive and the network of the legislative colleagues they develop.

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SREB's Regional Contract program, which began in the early years of the Board, enables states to share programs for health professionals and achieve greater efficiencies. Thousands of people in states without schools of dentistry, osteopathic medicine, podiatry and veterinary medicine have earned degrees at nationally recognized colleges and universities. Alabama currently receives almost \$3,000,000 from SREB states for providing services through SREB's contract-for-services program at Auburn University School of Veterinary Medicine, the Tuskegee University School of Veterinary Medicine and the University of Alabama at Birmingham School of Optometry.

I know that SREB President Mark Musick will want to seek an appointment with you to review Alabama's participation in the Board's many programs which benefit Alabama citizens.

In the meantime, I hope you will mark your calendar for the Board's 2003 Annual Meeting to be held June 22-24 at the Driskill Hotel in Austin.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr

cc: Mark Musick, President
Southern Regional Education Board
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Atlanta, Georgia 30318-5790