

December 12, 2001

Ms. Bridget Curran
NGA Center for Best Practices
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 267
Washington, D.C. 20001-1512

Dear Ms. Curran:

I am writing on behalf of the Senate Education Committee in support of Mississippi's *Colleges and Classrooms: State Strategies for Redesigning Teacher Preparation Policy* application. As Chairwoman of the committee, I recognize the importance of effectively preparing Mississippi's teachers and ensuring quality teaching for every child. We must do all we can to prepare, support and retain our teachers.

The Mississippi Senate strongly supports teacher recruitment, retention, licensure, preparation and continued professional development. Funding during our 1999 session focused on teacher recruitment, scholarships, incentives to recruit teacher education candidates and practicing teachers to high-need districts, and the support of graduate study. Legislation passed during the 2000 regular session focused on accountability at the school level rather than the district level. Mississippi's new accountability plan provides assistance and support in the development of improvement plans, including professional development plans, for schools at risk.

I look forward to serving on Mississippi's team for this initiative and in developing policy to improve teacher preparation and quality.

Very truly yours,

Alice Harden, Chairwoman
Senate Education Committee