

FACSIMILE

TO: Wayne Stonecypher, SBCJC
FROM: Kelly Riley, Policy Liaison
DATE: June 5, 2000
SUBJECT: Letter of Support for the Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant

Mississippi's Teacher Quality Enhancement grant 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.

Workgroup members representing the Department of Education, the Institutions of Higher Learning, and the Public Education Forum reviewed and approved the grant narrative at Thursday's meeting.

The workgroup has requested that Dr. Ray write a letter of support for the grant. I have attached a rough draft for his reference in developing your letter of support and I have also included a sample from the Arkansas Association of Two-Year Colleges from that state's successful grant application. Please address your letter of support to Governor Musgrove, but address the envelope in which you mail (or hand deliver) your letter of support to me so that I may be sure to receive it directly. We will be mailing the grant proposal this Friday, June 9, so **I need to receive Dr. Ray's letter of support by 5:00 p.m., Tuesday, June 6.**

Please contact me at 359-2528 if you have any questions. Thank you once again for your assistance and input on this grant opportunity.

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 on behalf of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges in support of Mississippi's Teacher Quality Enhancement Grant application. This grant provides the State Board the opportunity to work with the Mississippi Department of Education, the Institutions of Higher Learning and other educational entities to strengthen our 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.

Mississippi's community and junior colleges have a vested interest in ensuring that Mississippi provide the most effective and efficient training and support to our teachers. Over 60% of students enrolled in teacher education programs receive their general education at a community or junior college. Among other things, the grant would enable us to expand our Learning Plus labs to each of our campuses in order to provide training, especially in the area of preparing for the Praxis I, to students enrolled in teacher education courses. The community and junior colleges also serve as a gateway for attracting alternate route students to the teaching profession.

The U.S. Department of Education's funding of this grant will serve as a catalyst for Mississippi to strengthen our licensing standards, as well as our efforts to increase the number of and ensure the retention of qualified teachers. This grant will provide additional resources to those critical needs areas of our state and will utilize our National Board Certified teachers to assist and mentor other teachers.

On behalf of the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, I look forward to working with you in support of our teachers and of the efforts identified in this grant.

Very truly yours,

Dr. Olan Ray, Executive Director
State Board for Community and Junior
Colleges

