
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: MISSISSIPPI FORMUM ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES' GRANT PROPOSAL TO THE LUCENT FOUNDATION
DATE: 2/20/2001
CC: SIMMONS
BOYD
FILE

KC Caldwell of the Forum on Children and Families met with me last Friday to brief me on a grant proposal that the Forum is preparing for the Lucent Foundation, the charitable arm of Lucent Technologies. She provided a draft of the Forum's proposal yesterday, which I have summarized below. The Forum is requesting your support of this grant to the extent that this administration would like to be involved, either by a letter of support at minimum or by a more active role in the initiative.

The Lucent Foundation established a national initiative in 1999 to promote the development of a universal system of early childhood care and education. The Forum was one of 13 organizations chosen from a field of 200 applicants to establish community-based Lucent Universal Preschool Initiative (LUPI) sites. The Forum established its Families First Center at Horn Lake Elementary in DeSoto County. This site utilizes a Parents as Teachers curriculum, provides a resource center for other providers in the area, operates a mobile Parenting Center and provides a respite/resource program for kinship care providers (family members providing childcare).

Lucent has now committed funds sufficient to support four state level projects. The Forum's \$100,000 proposal has six objectives:

1. Build the system with better data collection, by using the resources available through KIDS COUNT to develop and test a system of collecting and reporting uniform data indicators that would create a no-cost state-wide data center on the KIDS COUNT website.
2. Build the system by developing a strategic investment strategy to create a universal system of early care and education.
3. Build the system with activities to improve the quality of available programs and services.
4. Build the system with strategies that expand the concept of universal to include children in the non-regulated segments of early care and education service providers (i.e., kinship providers).
5. Build the system by making information on the LUPI project easily accessible.

6. Build the system by connecting with stakeholders in early care and education at all levels.

The Forum anticipates that competition for the four state-wide sites will be strong amongst the 13 current projects and anticipates that Alabama will be Mississippi's toughest competition due to its proximity and Governor Siegelman's early childhood initiatives.

As discussed in the attached summary provided by Caldwell, the Forum has proposed several benefits that you will receive from this proposal:

- Credit for your increased focus on early childhood development in the State of Mississippi
- A relationship with Lucent which compliments the state's economic development initiatives. Caldwell stated that Lucent will be providing technical assistance to the state and could serve as a resource for bringing in national leaders/speakers for any meetings that you might hold on early childhood development or child care.
- This initiative could give you a vehicle to use to affirm a role for all early care and education stakeholders.

The proposal is due next Thursday, March 1. Please advise as to your desired level of support for this project, if any, and I will take the appropriate action. (draft letter of support, etc.).