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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** BOYD  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** 2003 SESSION EDUCATION AGENDAS  
**DATE** 12/23/02  
**CC:** FILE

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**MDE**

I've attached MDE's technical amendments (both general and specific CODE sections) for the upcoming session. Some comments on a few that could spark interest:

#4 Allow school boards to contract with private foresters or the State Forestry Commission for the management of 16<sup>th</sup> Section lands. Districts currently have to use the Forestry Commission. The Commission gets 15% of the sales revenue. Districts just want the option of contracting with a private forester for the management of 16<sup>th</sup> Section timber, with the private foresters getting the same 15%. This sounds fine, but 16<sup>th</sup> Section changes always stir up debate.

#6 Give the State Board of Education the authority to establish the salary for the superintendents of the MS Schools for the Blind and Deaf. Special salaries are always hot topics. The Board is requesting this authority due to the "Special School" status of these two schools. Steve Williams said that Thames supports the idea, but Reeves opposes it.

MDE is also proposing the attached statutory technical amendments (I have detailed explanations of each if you want to see them). A few to note regarding MAEP:

37-151-103 Proposal will provide MDE the authority to transfer MAEP funds on the 25<sup>th</sup> or 15<sup>th</sup> of December, whichever is in the best interest of the school district. This will alleviate school districts having to make payroll before MDE has transferred MAEP funds to the districts.

37-9-17 Proposal will push the teacher renewal (i.e., contract) date back to two weeks after the MAEP appropriation bill has been approved or April 30, whichever is later. Especially with four-month sessions, this will allow districts the ability to better plan in the event of reduced appropriations. WE NEED TO USE THE NEED FOR THIS AMENDMENT AS AN EXAMPLE OF WHAT IS BEING FACED BY OUR LOCAL DISTRICTS DUE TO THE "WIRE BAILING" OF THE EDUCATION BUDGET – THEY CAN'T PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

## IHL

IHL has four bills that it will be pushing this upcoming session:

Privatization to permit building parking garage (starting at USM): Proposed legislation would authorize the Board of Trustees to contract with a private entity for the design and construction of parking structures. The Board would lease the land for the construction of parking garages. According to Pam Smith, IHL has no funding for the construction of residence halls or parking garages, but has a need for both. Senator Gordon doesn't want to privatize residence halls, so IHL is shooting for parking garages. According to Pam, Shelby Thames is very interested in USM serving as the pilot, as the campus has severe parking problems.

Tax exemption for Foundations. IHL does not have the draft legislation for this proposal, but says it is needed. Pam rationalizes the need as the alumni associations have it now, so the general foundations should have it. She said that the state would lose approximately \$100,000 in tax revenue, but this would help foundations. I need to review the legislation when it is filed.

Foreign Travel: IHL tried to get this bill passed last year, but we vetoed it. They want exemption from having to submit "needless paperwork" to DFA for approval of foreign travel. IHL contends that this is a rubber-stamp process because DFA doesn't keep track of the amount of funding that this travel is paid for and their "approval" of the travel denotes that they cannot determine if the money is available for travel. Rather, DFA's stamp basically says "we received it and are sending it back." I informed Pam that I would anticipate the Governor having the same concerns as he did last year, those being the appearance of our loosening the oversight of foreign travel in tight economic times.

Accreditation issue: This legislation would authorize the Commission on College Accreditation to report any school that is not accredited by the Commission, but is advertising in the state, to the Attorney General and to petition the chancery court for an order enjoining course offerings or advertising. IHL sees this as a form of protection for taxpayers. Senators Ross and Burton killed the bill last year. Pam reported that IHL has a problem with Madison University. The Attorney General's Office drafted the language for the proposed legislation.

I think the foreign travel bill is the most likely to cause trouble.

I'm trying to get SBCJC's legislative agenda and I'll forward it to you as soon as I have it.