
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: NGA PORTLAND, ME, MEETING ON SCHOOL HEALTH PARTNERSHIPS: MISSISSIPPI TEAM'S STRATEGIC PLAN
DATE 10/30/01
CC: RENICK
BOYD
SMITH

You'll remember that Mississippi was 1 of 5 states (Mississippi, Missouri, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming) selected to participate in the NGA Center for Best Practices' Interdisciplinary Network on School Health Benefits. The purpose of this 2-year NGA initiative is to support five states in building and sustaining community-school partnerships that promote school health and improve academic achievement. Members of Mississippi's team include:

- Joyce Vaughn, MDE, Comprehensive School Health/Clinics/ School Nurses
- Charles Orr, MDE, HIV/AIDS Prevention Education Coordinator
- Bo Bowen, Division of Medicaid, Deputy Administrator
- Kaye W. Bender, Deputy State Health Officer
- Dr. Pat Cooper, Superintendent, McComb School District
- Dr. Ed Hill, Family Practitioner in Tupelo and Chair-Elect of the AMA
- Myself (Project Leader)

Our team attended the initiative's kick-off meeting in Portland, ME, this past weekend. The culmination of the meeting was each team's development of a strategic action plan for their state. Mississippi identified 3 goals/tasks that we would like to accomplish during this initiative:

1. **A Governor's Summit on Healthy School Children:** There is a need to educate policy makers, educational, business and county/community leaders on the benefits of school health programs. A summit on Healthy School Children would compliment your health initiative and could serve as a means of educating the public on the need for school health partnerships. Dr. Lloyd Kolbe of the Center for Disease Control's Division of Adolescent and School Health has volunteered to speak at this summit. His budget would cover his expenses. The team thinks this should be a Governor's Summit to stress the importance of the issue and to heighten awareness of the benefits of school health. The team thinks that next June, after the session and school are out,

would be a good time to host the summit. MDE and the Health Department have grants that could contribute funds towards the costs of the summit.

2. **Authorization/funding for Physical Education Curriculum and Coordinator:**

The team would like to see PE mandated for K-12 students. Studies show the positive impact that regular physical education/exercise can have on academic achievement, as well as graduation rates and juvenile delinquency. Several states have incorporated health standards into their state assessment/accountability models for schools. This could be a selling point for adopting a K-12 curriculum. The summit could introduce the need for such a curriculum.

You authorized me several weeks ago to convey to the Governor's Commission on Physical Fitness and Sports that you would support its efforts to support the Mississippi Alliance for School Health's (MASH) lobbying efforts in the upcoming session to seek funding for the PE Coordinator position at MDE that was authorized a few years ago, but never funded. The School Health Team sees this as a critical step in implementing an effective school health program in our schools.

3. **Formalization of Children's Council or Cabinet:**

Missouri and Maine are two of several states that have created a Children's Council or Cabinet to monitor and assess state services for children. The Mississippi team would like to create such a cabinet, via either Executive Order or statute, to report to either you or both you and the Legislature on the status of children in our state and the services that they receive. As you know, the Early Childhood Services Interagency Council monitors programs serving preschool children (defined as children who have not yet entered kindergarten), but our state does not have a council that monitors programs for children through the age of 18.

The team is requesting your approval of these three goals/tasks before they advance with any additional work. Please advise me of any concerns or comments that you may have on any of these. Once we have your approval, we will proceed with developing specific action steps and a timeline for accomplishing each. Thank you.