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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** RENICK  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** MS ECONOMIC COUNCIL: COLUMBIA GROUP/ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION PROJECT  
**DATE:** 12/11/02  
**CC:** FILE

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Peggy Howard of the MEC's Public Education Forum has called and invited our office to participate in a regional initiative. The Columbia Group will be assessing the feasibility of pursuing a regional initiative (funded by the Rockefeller Foundation) aimed at developing new and focused funding strategies that would dramatically increase the ability of at-risk youth to succeed in schools. The North Carolina Public School Forum will coordinate the effort.

Each participating Columbia Group state (there could be as many as eight; Mississippi could be one through Public Education Forum) would identify a two- or three-member team. There will be four meetings: two of them 2 nights and 3 days in duration / two of them 1 night and 2 days. If Mississippi is a partner in this planning process, we must commit to having at least two members of the three-person team attend all four meetings to insure continuity. The planning grant provided by the Rockefeller Foundation will cover all travel, room, and food costs for state teams attending the meetings. The goal is to complete the four meetings by April in order to prepare an implementation grant that could be considered in advance of the 2003/2004 school year.

At the final meeting of the planning process, a consensus must be reached regarding the feasibility of an implementation strategy. Presuming a consensus is reached, a regional strategy and plan of work must be crafted. Columbia Group plans for this initiative to result in (1) the creation of materials, plans, and strategies that would enable Columbia Group organizations to effectively lead campaigns that will make it possible to introduce new funding approaches that will better meet the needs of at-risk youth; (2) a regional grant proposal for such a campaign that would be compelling enough to attract foundation and corporate support to finance successful efforts within participating states.

Howard has asked our office, as well as a representative of MDE's finance team, to serve on the Mississippi state team. I think we should accept, as this will provide an avenue for the discussion of regional education funding and the initiative targets at-risk students, which we have not directly targeted, except for our involvement with Jobs for Mississippi Graduates. Can we accept this invitation and will I be the designated representative/team member?