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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** UPDATE ON NGA'S IDEA WORKGROUP  
**DATE** 2/21/02  
**CC:** FILE

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You are co-charing the joint NGA/Council of Chief State School Officers IDEA workgroup with Sue Ellen Reed, Indiana's Chief State School Officer. The following governors are also serving on the workgroup: Patton, Engler, Sundquist, O'Bannon, Guinn, Bush and Davis. **This subject is not scheduled to be discussed at NGA Winter Meeting, but I wanted to give you this update in case it is or you receive questions.**

Staff has met twice and discussed the following issues:

1. Assessment and accountability
2. Teacher quality
3. Unified system of services
4. Discipline

Staff will discuss funding at our next meeting. We have developed the following draft statements for each issue, except discipline, which we are not sure if the joint workgroup will want to issue a joint principle on.

**Assessment and Accountability**

1. We believe all children must be held to high standards. All children must be included in one state accountability system, the framework for which is provided in ESEA, and in all state measures of school performance. To the greatest extent possible the implementation of the new ESEA and changes to IDEA should respect existing state accountability systems.
2. Reporting should inform the public and parents about educational performance, based on outcome indicators, rather than on steps in a process. Reporting should reflect the performance of individual students and groups of students.
3. The area of accommodations (including use, application, selection, etc.) should be one of continued research.

4. Compliance processes should be streamlined to permit greater opportunity to focus on teaching and learning, while also providing essential protections for children.

### **Teacher Quality**

1. Professional development, whether pre service training or continuing education, should be research-based and linked to standards-based student outcomes.
2. A comprehensive and coordinated system of teacher preparation and professional development is critical to teacher quality, recruitment and retention. It is critical that this system link college and university faculty with classroom instruction. (may need to soften language or separate into two statements)
3. All educators must have training in both subject matter content and research-based instructional strategies to provide positive outcomes for diverse learners.
4. The recruitment and retention of a quality teacher force is currently compromised by an imbalance: the focus on procedures over teaching skills. A reduction in the emphasis on process over instruction will enhance the recruitment and retention of quality teachers.
5. The use of funding earmarked in IDEA for professional development should be determined by states, based on state priorities.
6. There is an important federal role to ensure the availability of teacher training programs for low incidence disabilities.
7. IDEA should provide incentives to foster innovation, including the application of and training in new technologies.

### **Unified System of Quality Services**

1. Efforts must be provided to make progress on eliminating disproportionality.
2. ESEA and IDEA continuity should lead to consistency in federal education policy, flexibility in service provision and funding issues, and accountability for instructional performance, while reducing unnecessary procedural dependency. Specific emphasis needs to be placed on:
  - Incentives within the general education classroom to improve instruction of all learners;
  - Reduction of the need to refer to special education for specialized instructional support to meet the needs of all diverse learners; and
  - Maximization and alignment of early intervention services, both educational (pre-K) and programmatic (state and federal)

3. General education needs to be conceptualized as an array of services. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act is one of many instructional support services for general education, and the determination of those services should be based primarily on the child's educational needs rather than predominantly on disability determination.