
OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

TO: GOVERNOR
FROM: RILEY
SUBJECT: RAND INSTITUTE REPORT "IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT: WHAT NAEP SCORES TELL US" TO BE RELEASED JULY 25
DATE 7/24/00
CC: BOYD
MADER
FILE

NGA conducted a conference call today regarding the above report that is to be released tomorrow at 11:00 a.m. (ET). The report found that the education reforms of the 1980s and 1990s seem to be working, but that some states are doing better than others in making achievement gains and in elevating students' performance compared with students of similar racial and socioeconomic background in other states. The report ranked the 44 participating states by raw achievement scores, by scores that compare students from similar families and by score improvements.

Among the 44 participating states ranked by raw achievement scores, Mississippi scored lowest on the seven National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) tests given between 1990 and 1996. However, Mississippi ranked towards the middle in average math tests score gain. In the cross-state comparison of achievement by students from similar families, the press release states "Louisiana, Mississippi, West Virginia, Alabama and Rhode Island perform almost as dismally as California." As discussed in the conference call, states that rank high in scores among students from similar families have higher parental educational levels, higher personal income, lower teenage pregnancy rates and fewer single parent families.

As discussed in NGA's conference call today, the report found that to raise achievement scores, the most efficient and effective use of education dollars is to target states with high proportions of minority and disadvantage students with funding for lower pupil-teacher ratios, more widespread kindergarten efforts, and more adequate teacher resources. As for teacher salaries and education, the report states, "efforts to increase the quality of teachers in the long run are important, but...significant productivity gains can be obtained with the current teaching force if their working conditions are improved."

I am copying Lisa on this memo and am providing her with a copy of the press release should she get any calls from the press.