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OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE  
INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** A BETTER CHANCE INITIATIVE IN THE DELTA  
**DATE:** 5/2/01  
**CC:** FILE

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Dr. Michael Nettles, professor at the University of Michigan and also your fellow NBPTS board member, phoned last week to make us aware of a new initiative being started in the Delta by A Better Chance out of New York City. A Better Chance is a national non-profit started in 1963 to identify, recruit and develop leaders among young black students, particularly those living in the rural south. The program has identified over 11,000 students and placed them in one of 200 Member Schools (independent day and boarding schools, as well as selected high schools) to encourage their completion of high school. A Better Chance started its *Pathways to College* curriculum in 1995 to help students become the strongest possible college applicants. A Better Chance implemented its second *Pathways to College* program in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, and all 93 graduates of the program have gone on to four-year colleges.

A Better Chance conducted a five-day site visit to the Greenville, Western Line, Hollandale, Leland and Shaw school districts. They identified five high schools with motivated black students who need additional information and encouragement to attend college. A Better Chance proposes to begin its work in the Delta this fall, focusing on 9<sup>th</sup> through 12<sup>th</sup> graders. 45 students will be invited to participate in each of the five high school's programs. 12<sup>th</sup> graders will participate in intensive college and financial aid application preparation, with guidance also provided to their parents. 11<sup>th</sup> graders will focus on career exploration and financial aid. 10<sup>th</sup> graders will focus on SAT preparation and identifying their personal skills and talents. 9<sup>th</sup> graders will be introduced to the program and its potential for their futures. All students will work on developing written and verbal communication skills. A Better Chance will hire local part-time staff to facilitate and manage the program.

Dr. Nettles simply wanted to make us aware of the program. He has provided the contact information for Judith Griffin, President of A Better Chance.

Please advise as to if you wish to take any action on this matter. We could write a letter to Griffin or we could try to set up an appointment the next time she is in the state. A Better Chance sounds like an excellent education program for the Delta area.