

APPENDIX M

Letter of Support from MS Superintendent

Date

Superintendent Name

District

Address

Dear District Superintendent:

In an effort to further improve the teaching and learning of reading and language arts, my office is working with the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro to implement and evaluate an early literacy program, called PAVEd for Success, in selected Mississippi kindergarten classrooms. The study is being funded by the Institute of Education Sciences at the U.S. Department of Education. I am writing to encourage you to support this study in your district.

PAVEd for Success, or PAVE, developed by researchers at the University of Georgia, is a professional development program designed to help promote children's vocabulary skills by supporting teachers' use of a set of strategies known to be associated with an increase in vocabulary. Through the PAVE intervention, teachers learn strategies for enhancing children's vocabulary development during interactive book reading; cognitively challenging conversations; and direct vocabulary instruction. Through early enhancement of children's vocabulary knowledge, the goal is to strengthen the foundation for overall literacy development.

Beginning Fall 2007, researchers from the SERVE Center at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro and its partner, Abt Associates Inc. will be identifying elementary schools in your district and inviting them to participate in the study. They will recruit up to 84 schools across the Delta region. The study is scheduled to begin in the Summer of 2008. It will include professional development for kindergarten teachers in selected schools, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of this intervention in the classrooms. In the coming weeks, study staff will be contacting you to describe the study in more detail and to answer questions.

The PAVE intervention has shown promise for increasing vocabulary skills in schools similar to those in your district. It is an opportunity for us to continue improving our student's literacy skills by implementing evidenced-based instructional strategies. Your participation is key to the success of this study, and I want to thank you, in advance, for the opportunity to work in your district. Those of us at the State

Department are constantly looking for opportunities to enhance the learning and education of our children, and we are very excited about this prospect.

If you have any questions, please feel free to call me at 601-359-3513. Thank you for taking the time to help us with this project.

Sincerely,

Hank M. Bounds
State Superintendent of Education
Mississippi Department of Education