

Office of the Governor
David Ronald Musgrove, Governor



Governor's Task Force for Classroom Technology

MARCH 2, 2000

Mission and Composition

Opening educational opportunities for Mississippi's future

The Governor's Task Force for Classroom Technology is a time-limited commission with the **sole purpose of accomplishing the Governor's goal of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every public elementary and secondary classroom in Mississippi by the end of 2002**. From this mission, the task force will then be charged with three goals:

- 1) Support legislative initiatives to fund the project;
- 2) Raise private sector awareness and financial support; and,
- 3) Execute the initiative.

As the impact of this task force will reach every community in Mississippi, it is the Governor's intention that this task force be gender, racially, and geographically balanced. Governor Musgrove will create the task force through an executive order with an appropriations bill to follow for per diems and travel expenses.

This task force will be co-chaired by Governor Musgrove and Dr. Richard Thompson, State Superintendent of Education. Other members of the task force, as appointed by the Governor (unless otherwise noted), will include at least 16 representatives, or their designees, from the following groups:

- Information Technology Services (David Litchliter);
- Forum for Public Education (William Lewis);
- Education Technology Council (Helen Soule);
- State Department of Education (Nathan Slater);
- Mississippi Economic Council (Blake Wilson);
- Private Foundation Interests and Corporations (one seat for each committed interest or corporation);
- Mississippi Association of School Superintendents (Jayne Sargent);
- 3 teachers (Deloise James, Kathy Brookshire, Vanessa Barnes);
- 2 school administrators (Henry Arledge, Ken Reid)
- Education Televisions Authority (Larry Miller);
- State Parent Teacher Association (Yvonne Steadman);
- Office of the Governor;
- Legislature (Senator Mike Chaney, Representative Cecil Brown); and,
- Other organizations as deemed appropriate by the co-chairs.

During the first informational meeting (2/9/00), discussions centered around schools applying for grants to purchase computers so those desiring connection can be identified and processed. Blake Wilson (MEC), Robin Costa (Maddox Foundation), John Lovorn (The PACE Group), and Tom Pittman (AOL & the Pittman Family Trust) committed to the task force's success. Discussions also centered on a third-party contractor to serve as

project manager and report to the chairs on a timely basis. Entergy has also expressed interest in the success of the task force. During the second meeting (2/16/00) commitments were obtained from David Litchliter, Helen Soule, and William Lewis.

Function

The task force's work can be subdivided into three phases: planning, funding, implementing. The task force will dissolve on December 31, 2002, upon completion of the objective. This task force will not be charged with any additional purpose or function other than to **accomplish the Governor's goal of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every public elementary and secondary classroom in Mississippi by the end of 2002.**

Planning

One challenge before the task force will be to determine the most cost-effective method for providing Internet accessible connections to the every classroom. Ideas have surfaced promoting web televisions, computer workstations (terminals), or computers as classroom connections.

As the task force begins to locate financial resources for the project, an inventory of the classroom computers should be completed. This inventory is critical to determining the total cost for the task force.

The approximate number of Mississippi classroom needing Internet accessible computers is 12,500 (approximately one-half of all classrooms). Equipment costs for 12,500 computers with Internet access will cost approximately \$10 million ($12,500 \times \$800 = \$10,000,000$). This estimate also accounts for volunteers installing network access to every classroom (i.e., pulling wires) with technical support provided through the Education Technology Council, Information Technology Services, and local interests.

Funding

Senator Chaney has identified \$3.4 million in state dollars that may become available July 1, 2000 (SB 2423). It has been suggested that the state would need an additional \$1.6 million to fund 50% of the project. The task force will be responsible for motivating members of the Legislature to appropriate these funds.

The Governor's Office with Information Technology Services and the State Department of Education will be responsible for identifying and applying for federal and other public sources to support the task force's mission. Dr. Thompson has agreed to check on the status of unissued bonds for equipment purchases.

Leaders in the private and non-profit sectors will be responsible for raising at least \$5 million to match public dollars. Leadership Mississippi was also mentioned as a group of energetic professionals that could help accomplish the goals of this task force.

Implementing

The Departments of Education and Information Technology Services will purchase the computers and be responsible for coordinating connectivity in compliance with federal and state guidelines. Parents and teachers working with local interests and others will complete the process of placing and connecting the computers.