Computers in the Classroom – Newsletter article   April 2001

We set a goal to place an Internet-accessible computer in every public elementary and secondary classroom in Mississippi by the end of 2002, and charged the members of the Classroom Technology Task Force with the job of accomplishing this goal. We dared Mississippians to imagine computers at the fingertips of every Mississippi school child, and we are more than half way to meeting our goal. We have now installed 6,325 Internet-accessible computers across the State of Mississippi, which will give us a total of 6,277 to install before we reach our goal of placing all computers in these classroom by the end of 2002. The selection of the schools was based on three criteria. Number one, they had to apply. Number two, the school was wired for Internet services, and number three, the teachers of each school agreed to participate in teacher training on the use of the Internet. The computers supplied by six different companies were offered at substantial discounts, and vendors provided value-adds such as web sites, educational software and teacher training at no cost to the state or local school. The Mississippi Department of Education surveyed schools to determine the number of classrooms with computers and Internet connections in May 2000. Of the 30,033 public classrooms in Mississippi, there were 12,602 classrooms without a computer and 6,871 classrooms without an Internet connection. "By placing these computers in classrooms across our state, we are giving teachers another tool to enhance the learning environment for our children," said the Governor. "We are giving our students the means to open doors that provide countless learning opportunities for them." Governor Musgrove and Carolyn Shanks, CEO and President of Entergy Mississippi will kick off a campaign to secure the funds needed to install the remaining computers. "We are on track to make Mississippi the first state in the nation to have a computer in every classroom," said Governor Musgrove. We are also asking the task force to double and triple their efforts to raise the funds needed for the additional computers.