

MEMORANDUM

February 17, 2003

TO: Governor

FROM: John

RE: Southern Growth Policies Board briefing

I spoke with Rep. Cecil Brown this afternoon about this meeting. He said it will be an informal gathering of the members of the Education and Juvenile Justice Committees from both the House and Senate. Because of your position as chairman, Cecil would like you to make a few remarks at the beginning.

Jim Clinton will be at the meeting and will need to be recognized. Others to recognize include the state's trustees on the SGPB: Rep. Cecil Brown, Sen. Terry Burton, John Lovorn, Kelly Riley, and Robin Joyce Robinson.

Much of the discussion is expected to focus on addressing workforce training and the dropout rate (see attached report on school dropouts).

Points to be made on:

Workforce Training:

- Workforce Investment Network (WIN) Centers have been established across the state to help bring employers and potential employees together in one location.
- Rural Economic Impact Authority called for in State of the State address is currently being considered by the Legislature. It focuses on providing assistance to new and existing businesses as well as workforce training for Mississippians who have lost their jobs in rural Mississippi.
- Quality jobs are coming to Mississippi. Nissan and suppliers demanding higher level of skills, and that's good for the state.

Drop-Out Rate:

- Mississippi is investing in education, in the promise and potential of our young people. We can't afford to let any of them slip through the cracks.
- Education subcommittee report on dropout rates found problems with reporting process. More interesting was the importance of catching potential dropouts early.
- Our children have to start school ready to learn – this is why I proposed the Summer Start program, to make sure our kids have every advantage, every opportunity, for learning in kindergarten. They should leave kindergarten prepared to learn for a lifetime.

