

**Proposed Communication Plan
For
Developing Support for the
Teacher Pay Raise Legislation**

Issue: Teacher Pay Raise

Purpose: To Raise Support for Legislation that would Raise Teacher Pay to the Southeastern Average through a four-year plan.

Background: In the Governor's State of the State Address he stated, "Our very future sits today in classrooms across this state listening to Mississippi's teachers. Those teachers need our support. Those teachers deserve recognition for their efforts; they deserve a fair and living wage for their labors of the heart and mind. We must take teacher pay in Mississippi to the Southeaster average."

"We can reach that goal in four years by investing \$22 million dollars the first year and staggering increases over the next three years. We can do this and protect the fiscal integrity of our budget. With 5% growth in any given year, we can afford to pay our teachers what they deserve. As head of the executive branch, I will reprioritize the budget in any year when our economic growth is less than 5%.

Strategies: To raise support for the teacher pay raise issue by:

- getting the vocal and written support of teachers, teacher organizations, the State Board of Education and other educational organizations and groups
- calling the general public to action in support of the issue.
- identifying key legislators to help raise votes for the issue.
- gaining the support of business leaders across the state.
- utilizing media resources including print, television and radio
- identifying influential individuals from across the state to endorse the Governor's position.

Tactics: Use televison, radio and print media, special events, key individuals, business and social organizations and public/media appearances to show the importance of the Teacher Pay Raise Issue, show support of the Governor's position on the issue and influence votes in the legislature.

Media

Print:

- Develop op-ed pieces from the Governor to all dailies and weeklies.
- Ask for designees in the House and Senate to develop op-ed pieces for distribution to all dailies and weeklies.
- Ask for Superintendent of Education to develop an op-ed piece to be published in all dailies, weeklies, all teacher trade publications/newsletters, community college newspapers and university newspapers. Also blast fax a shortened version to all schools with a message and a call to action of the teachers.
- Distribute press releases to print media, when appropriate.

Television:

- Inform designated television stations when the Governor, First Lady and Dr. Richard Thompson will be making appearances, meeting with/talking to, teachers in school districts that fall in designated media markets.
- Schedule opportunities for the Governor to appear on “live shows” to “get the message out”
- Distribute any press releases to television stations, when appropriate.

Internet Technology:

- Use the Governor’s web site to “get the message out”
- Provide a place where people can comment as to their support of the Teacher Pay Raise.
- Post all op-ed letters from the Governor, selected individuals, Dr. Thompson etc. on the web site.
- List upcoming public appearances at the various schools throughout the state on the web site.

Radio:

- Use local radio talk shows to promote the Governor’s message.
- Distribute press releases to radio stations, when appropriate.

Public Appearances:

- Develop opportunities for the Governor and/or First Lady, and/or Dr. Richard Thompson to make appearance at schools throughout the state so that they can talk with/to teachers about the issues and raise teacher support.
- Develop opportunities to “get the message out” at teacher organizational meetings.
- Use already scheduled speaking engagements to “get the message out”
- Look for speaking opportunities where it is more appropriate to “get the message out”.
- Create press conferences where the selected individual from a certain district or area of the state publicly endorse the Governor’s stance on the Teacher Pay Raise issue. Hand out copies of their letter of support at the press conference.

Talking Points: