

*Remarks for the  
Education Press Conference  
September 12, 2003*

- Thank you Dr. Johnson and Charlie Deaton.
- We have made tremendous progress in education in the State of Mississippi.
- Dr. Johnson, I would like to commend you and your staff for having the vision and dedication to work with all of our school systems, our teachers, and our parents to help each child.
- Charlie Deaton, to you and to the rest of the State Board of Education - you are right, this has been several years in the making and we have done it together.
- In 1999, as Lt. Governor, we passed Senate Bill 2156, the Mississippi Student Achievement Improvement Act of 1999 and

- in 2000, we passed Senate Bill 2488, the Mississippi School Accountability Model
- It was this work together that we are here today and I want to commend all who worked with us.
  - As Dr. Johnson said, this is a baseline to measure future improvement.
  - Mississippi is earning its future, reaping the rewards and is focused on its priorities
    - Priorities- Education and jobs
    - Improving the quality of life for all of its 2.8 million citizens
  - Today, Dr. Johnson and Charlie Deaton have given you the good news.
    - More than 80% of Mississippi public schools have achieved a rating of Level 3/Successful or higher.

- For those schools who have not reached Level 3, we are all here to help you and your community.
- Each child deserves a bright future.
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> when fully implemented
  - Computers in the Classroom
  - Accountability
    - Princeton Review: 12<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
    - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind”
  - 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
  - Historic action of funding education first

- The youth of Mississippi are 1/3 of the population, yet all of our future.
- By investing in education and strong accountability measures, we will continue to see those investments pay off in terms of a better quality of life, a more competitive workforce, and more high quality good paying jobs.
- As a parent, we all want our children to have an opportunity to stay right here in Mississippi.
- Good schools, good jobs, good communities
- Thank you again.