

*Remarks for the
Mississippi Partners in Education Press Conference
April 22, 2002*

Good afternoon. It is great to be here with you today, and to talk about the good work being done by Mississippi Partners in Education.

When I spoke at the Governor's Awards luncheon last October, I talked about the great things we were doing in education here in Mississippi – great things made possible because of the cooperation, dedication and commitment of groups like Mississippi Partners in Education.

I talked about issues like teacher pay and the “Computers in the Classroom” initiative.

Those programs are going strong.

During the 2002 session, we fully funded the teacher pay raise, and now we’re on track to lift the average salary in Mississippi from 49th to 19th in the nation.

We fought off a reduction in funding for the Adequate Education Program, a program I helped create, and kept funding at the current level.

And, we kept a commitment to making sure teachers have the supplies they need in the classroom – without having to use their own money to buy them.

Much of what happens with education in Mississippi happens because of groups such as this. With committed and caring volunteers from around the state, you are making a tremendous difference.

In recognition of the great work being done, I am proud to issue a proclamation honoring your efforts.

(read proclamation and sign)

I finished my remarks last October with an old Chinese proverb – “learning is a treasure that follows its owner everywhere.” And, as I said then, thank you for your work in helping reveal the treasure for our children.