

VIDEOCONFERENCE PRESS BRIEFING ON SREB TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS

CNN Center Floor, Room 2

At approximately 11:50 a.m. we will move to an adjacent room that will be set up for the videoconference press briefing. It will contain a monitor on which we will see and hear Governor Patton and a podium from which Governor Musgrove will lead the press briefing. We are proposing that Governor Musgrove, Governor Patton, Chancellor Tom Meredith, Governor Huckabee and President Paul Stanton participate in the videoconference press briefing.

We propose that Governor Musgrove open the press briefing with comments and that he introduce in turn Governor Patton, Chancellor Meredith, Governor Huckabee and President Stanton.

Governor Musgrove begins the press briefing at the podium.

The actions taken today by the Southern Regional Education Board signal another milestone in the role of educational technology in the future of the South. Earlier this year, here in Atlanta, the Southern Regional Education Board adopted twelve goals for education and we challenged ourselves to lead the nation in educational progress.

Furthermore, we pointed out that this is not an idle dream, that the reality is that several of our states are already leading the nation in making educational progress and, in fact, leading the nation in absolute terms. For example, Georgia leads the nation in absolute terms of its percentage of four-year-olds enrolled in pre-school programs, and its percentage of high school graduates receiving merit-based college scholarships.

The truth is that we will not achieve the ambitious education goals we have set without fully utilizing technology. The education technology programs we have set in motion today and the ones that are already successful and that Governor Patton will help us commemorate today point the way toward fully utilizing educational

technology.

We are going to begin today with a bit of electronic "deja vu" by Governor Patton. Governor we welcome you electronically to the CNN Center in Atlanta. We can see you and trust you can hear and see us (Governor Musgrove will want to wait for Governor Patton to acknowledge his comments).

Governor Patton it was almost five years ago to the day that you participated in an electronic news conference with the Governor of West Virginia and the Vice Chair of SREB to throw the switch and turn on the *Electronic Campus*. The SREB staff with you and Governor Underwood that day in Frankfort and Charleston still describe that as the day the *Electronic Campus* was born. We were excited about the numbers you announced that day. I am not going to make a math test as part of this *Electronic Campus*, but the truth is you could have taken the more than 100 courses that we were offering that day five years ago and the more than 40 universities offering them and multiplied those two numbers--and we would still have had only half as many courses as we are offering today in the *Electronic Campus*! Governor Patton, tell us about the dramatic changes in the *Electronic Campus* and about Kentucky Virtual University, which is one of America's most successful.

[Governor Patton will comment about the dramatic growth in the *Electronic Campus* and about the Kentucky Virtual University. When he finishes his remarks, I suggest that we see if there are questions for Governor Patton. It probably makes sense for him to sign off after his comments and any questions for him rather than to remain at the podium as the briefing continues at CNN Center. We will check with Governor Patton to see how he wishes to handle this.]

Thank you, Governor Patton. The actions taken today about an electronic learning network of services for adult learners may signal an expansion of a different kind of the *Electronic Campus*. While the courses and degree programs are growing, now we are going to have a set of services that are important to adult learners that are going to be rapidly expanding in this Mentor Network linked to the *Electronic Campus*.

The *Electronic Campus* is a critically important vehicle, and today I believe we set in motion an educational technology road map when we endorsed the action

agenda for the South in distance learning.

Our three key themes of increasing access, improving and ensuring quality and driving down costs are the right criteria for that road map.

So are the priorities that we have set to extend citizen and student access. We need access to the infrastructure, to the educational programs, to the services that students need and to the training that adults need in the work force.

We have endorsed taking advantage of regional resources that can be shared. If there is ever a place where the cliché that "we shouldn't reinvent the wheel" is true, it is in the area of technology. Technology gives us the power to share resources that we have constructed in our states.

An important part of the action agenda that we are recommending for educational technology in distance learning has to do with spending our dollars more wisely, not just spending more. There are state financing policies and institutional financing policies that can be changed and yield more on the dollar. Some of the technology infrastructure costs should be a part of the capital budgets in order to plan for them in a rational way.

And finally, as part of the action agenda for technology, we need to provide more and better information for quality improvement and accountability. In an electronic world where courses and programs can be delivered into homes and offices, the best strategy to ensure quality will be an informed and knowledgeable consumer, and not regulation. An electronic world lends itself to a limited amount of regulation, but the opportunities for information for the consumer in the electronic world are almost unlimited.

Students need to know whether courses will transfer and whether they can be counted toward a degree. They need to know about the quality of the course through student ratings or the opportunity to see student and graduate comments that are easily accessible.

Students need to know something about the track record of those who have gone before them and how successful students have been in completing and passing

courses. Those are legitimate pieces of information, but not information that is now normally available.

The action agenda for extending postsecondary education by using technology is a challenge to SREB and to each of our states. We will be giving the SREB Board and states a progress report in June and next December to the Executive Committee meeting.

One of the things we have to get right in distance learning is pricing of distance learning if we want to make it more accessible and more available to more persons, particularly to adults. At SREB we have been asserting that means we need an electronic tuition rate for distance learning rather than the outdated in-state and out-of-state tuition rates that have very little to do with an electronic world and the electronic delivery of courses. More than a thousand of the *Electronic Campus* courses are offered at one rate for students regardless of where they live, which is the basic definition of an electronic tuition rate.

Georgia is a state that has taken an important step toward getting it right in the pricing of distance learning. The Georgia Board of Regents early this year approved what I think is an important electronic tuition rate policy that other states will do well to pay attention to. Chancellor Tom Meredith, would you describe and comment on the Georgia policy?

(Chancellor Meredith will make a statement about electronic tuition rates.)

Governor Huckabee, as chairman of the Southern Governors' Association, you were a proponent of the more effective use of technology. You had one of the great conference titles of any Southern governors meeting when you labeled your meeting "From Fiber Optics to Fly Fishing" to spotlight the assets of Arkansas. The Learning Network that we have endorsed today and that we call SREB's WAYS IN Mentor seems very consistent with the advice you have offered about using technology in other areas of business and government. I suspect that Arkansas will take a close look at the Mentor possibilities. So for our guests and members of the press, would you describe the highlights of the WAYS IN Mentor program we endorsed today?

(Governor Huckabee makes comments)

Thank you Governor. One of the persons closest to the application and use of the technology that we are talking about is President Paul Stanton, Vice Chairman of the Board. President Stanton can you tell us from a university's standpoint how the program that Governor Huckabee just described will affect the persons your university serves.

(President Paul Stanton makes a statement.)

This has been a bit of a whirlwind tour from the success of the *Electronic Campus*, the incredible success over the past five years, to the actions we have taken today and the impact these actions may have. [Governor, if there is time--if it is 12:30-12:35, we can take five or ten minutes for questions. If we are past that time, you could simply adjourn us and say that individuals will be available for questions or comments after we adjourn.]

Thank you for being a part of this important day. We do have a light lunch available. If you have time, I hope you will stay.

And remember *Goals for Education: Challenge to Lead*. We can lead the nation in educational progress. Let's go home and work to make our goals . . . our challenge . . . a reality.