

May 9, 2002

Dr. John Jackson  
National Director of Education  
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People  
4805 Mount Hope Drive  
Baltimore, Maryland 21215

Dear Dr. Jackson:

I am in receipt of the NAACP's *Call for Action in Education*. Mississippi is taking significant steps to ensure access to a quality education for all students.

Because disparity still existed in funds available for educating every child at an adequate level, the Legislature enacted the Mississippi Adequate Education Program in 1997 to address these disparities and to ensure that every school district will have sufficient funds available to provide a Level III accreditation or adequate education for every child. The Mississippi Adequate Education Program's new funding formula is being phased in over a multi-year period, with full funding expected in FY 04.

The Mississippi Department of Education is currently implementing a new accountability and assessment system to identify low performing schools. Schools not meeting established growth expectations or grade-level proficiency standards will be designated "Priority Schools" and will be provided resources to assist in the development and evaluation of improvement plans for the school. Further, the Department is awaiting official guidance regulations from the federal government for implementation of *No Child Left Behind*.

The Governor's *Computers in the Classroom Initiative* will accomplish my goal of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every public elementary and secondary classroom in Mississippi by the end of 2002. This goal achieves two objectives: (1) enhancing the educational experience for Mississippi students and (2) helping bridge the digital divide for all Mississippians. To date, no state has accomplished this goal.

As the first state selected by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges' Center for Public Higher Education Trusteeship and Governance (AGB) to host a summit on higher education, Mississippi brought together government, business and education leaders during 2001 and January 2002 to provide a cooperative framework for education, economic and social progress. The Summit's *Building Opportunity in Mississippi Through Higher Education* report specifically explored the benefits of

opening the doors to greater educational attainment and economic opportunities among Mississippi's African-American population, not only for individual families, but for the state as a whole.

Mississippi will continue to take action to build upon these and other initiatives to ensure a quality education for all of our state's students. Your *Call for Action in Education* will provide valuable information in our efforts. As always, we look forward to working with your organization and others to secure a bright future for our citizens.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM:klr