

I've cut and pasted background info regarding JumpStart! into this memo. We referred to it as Summer Start during the State of the State, but name doesn't really matter.

I've attached my most recent cost estimates for implementing the program in both our 10 priority schools to be announced in early September, as well as the 10 schools that will be in some form of school improvement in early September. I've based my cost estimates on MDE's actual 01-02 cost per student, rather than AFT's suggested \$2,000.

Summer Start Background: Prepared for Phillip Kinney 12/02

Sandra Feldman, AFT's national president, introduced Kindergarten-Plus at AFT's 2002 national convention. Kindergarten-Plus would provide an extended-year, full-day kindergarten to disadvantaged children by enabling them to begin kindergarten the summer before they would ordinarily enter and to continue through the summer after kindergarten, right before entering first grade.

Research has found that disadvantaged children, on average lag substantially behind other children in literacy, numeracy and social skills even before formal schooling begins. However, once they are in school, they progress at least as rapidly as other children do. By the end of the kindergarten year, the basic skills gap between disadvantaged and other children has virtually disappeared. But, because advantaged children start out ahead in basic skills before kindergarten, they are more ready than disadvantaged children are to develop more complex skills during kindergarten.

A study of youngsters who attended extended-year kindergarten found that they outperformed children from their regular kindergarten program the next year in math, reading and general knowledge. Kindergarten-Plus would give disadvantaged children the chance to catch up earlier on basic skills (the summer before regular kindergarten entry) so they would be developmentally more ready to acquire higher skills during the regular kindergarten period. And if there were more time for reinforcement (the summer after kindergarten), the evidence suggests that the higher-skills gap that exists between advantaged and disadvantaged children at the end of the regular kindergarten year would narrow.

Kindergarten-Plus is not a substitute for universal early childhood education. However, the nation's progress towards this has been sluggish. Kindergarten-Plus is doable and affordable now. .

AFT estimates that four extra months of kindergarten would cost about \$2,000 per child. Approximately 26,000 poor children in Mississippi would qualify (i.e., they are not being served by a Head Start summer educational program). The cost of Kindergarten-Plus assumes providing young children with the same supports available to elementary students, including meals, transportation, school nurses, special education, counseling and other services as required. Teachers would be certified and receive professional development to the same extent as other teachers. Music, art and other specialists would be available on the same basis as in the rest of elementary school. The summer-before-

kindergarten part of Kindergarten-Plus could work by expanding and improving Head Start.

Kindergarten-Plus could reduce the need for remediation and special education, lower dropout rates, increase the supply of productive citizens, and ultimately save the state millions. Education remains the best hope for lifting children out of poverty.

*SUMMER START ABSTRACT INCLUDED ON
2003 STATE OF THE STATE INITIATIVES' SUMMARY SHEET*

Summer Start provides an extended-year, full-day kindergarten to children who have not been exposed to basic skills by allowing them to begin kindergarten two months the summer before they would ordinarily enter and to continue for two months after kindergarten, right before entering first grade. This program provides children with the chance to catch up earlier on basic skills so they are developmentally ready to acquire higher skills during the regular kindergarten period. Approximately \$5 million provides four extra months of instruction. Summer Start will reduce the need for remediation and special education, lower dropout rates, increase the skills of our workforce, and ultimately save the state millions.

(NOTE: Preliminary cost estimates proved expensive, so we suggested \$5 million for initial piloting of the program.)