

## **Education**

### **Education as the Priority**

*“Public education is the number one economic development issue in our state, and it is the number one quality of life issue, too. So education must be the number one priority for state government. Stable funding is essential for our schools; not just for election years, but for every year.” (Campaign announcement speech)*

Governor Musgrove has demonstrated his commitment to education throughout his career as a public servant – as a school board attorney, state senator, lieutenant governor and governor. Governor Musgrove has stated that education is the fundamental key to a bright economic future for Mississippi consistently and repeatedly in his State of the State addresses (see attached excerpts) and has made education his administration’s priority.

Throughout his administration, Governor Musgrove has visited schools, community colleges and universities. Governor Musgrove recognizes the critical role of faculty at our community and four-year colleges and has solicited the opinions and concerns of faculty and staff during these campus visits. He has also invited representatives of the faculty senates to his office to discuss his comprehensive plan for education.

The Governor has also held town hall meetings with parents, business leaders and concerned citizens around our state:

- 2002 town hall meetings: Greenville, Tupelo, Biloxi
- 2003 town hall meetings: Biloxi, McComb, Natchez, Pelahatchie, West Point, Leland

A list of Mississippi’s educational accomplishment during Governor Musgrove’s current administration is attached.

### **Education Funding**

*“The biggest item on my agenda is going to be education. Stable funding is essential. This current roller coaster of huge appropriations one year and severe cuts the next has the worst possible effect on managing education... We’re asking superintendents and principals to manage their schools like a business, yet we tell them at the beginning of their budget year that have this amount and to expect millions in cuts, then that may or may not materialize. How can we expect them to educate our children under these circumstances?” (East MS Business Journal, March 2003)*

The Governor’s budget has consistently recommended higher funding for education than that of the Legislature (see attached spreadsheet). The Legislature is charged with appropriating funds, while the Governor is charged with reducing budgets when state

revenue collections do not meet projections. Throughout his administration, Governor Musgrove has fought for realistic and accurate budget projections, as well as stable funding for education:

Governor Musgrove vetoed FY 2002 K-12 education appropriation bills because the Legislature did not adequately fund education:

- Veto Message for HB 776 (Diversion of EEF funds and deletion of 50% of year end cash balance transfer to EEF): “Education is the priority for this administration. The state must ensure that K-12 education is adequately funded to provide an effective education to our students. Rather than providing secure and responsible funding sources for K-12 education, House Bill No. 776 simply shuffles existing revenue sources to address Fiscal Year 2001 deficits and Fiscal Year 2002 expenses. The Legislature’s diversion of existing resources for our teachers, our classrooms and our students does not ensure adequate funding.”
- Veto Message for HB 1609 (General Education and Vo Tech): “The state must ensure that K-12 education is adequately funded. House Bill No. 1069 provides for an \$11.1 million increase in general funds to the Department of Education’s general program, but only at the expense of a \$17.1 million cut in general funds to the Department of Education’s Minimum Program in House Bill No. 1611.”
- Veto Message for HB 1611 (Minimum Program): “House Bill No. 1611 provides for a \$17.1 million cut in general funds to the Department of Education’s Minimum Program and only funds the Minimum Program by utilizing approximately \$30.5 million in Education Enhancement textbook and classroom supply funds as authorized by House Bill No. 776. In other words, the Legislature has funded the minimum program by reducing the resources for textbooks and classroom supplies, both of which are critical to our teachers being able to teach effectively and our students being able to learn. This is not the way to build a sound foundation for education in our state.

To the extent possible under law, the Governor exempted education budgets from necessary budget reductions and restored reductions when possible. DFA, per the Governor’s direction, unreserved \$10 million for the Minimum Program on June 28, 2001.

*“Because state agencies like welfare, Medicaid and corrections have overspent their budgets by hundreds of millions of dollars in the last three years, other programs have been cut. What has been cut?”*

- *State support for colleges and universities has been cut \$99 million over the last three years;*
- *State support for community colleges has been cut \$47 million, or 23% over the last three years....” (Campaign announcement speech)*

Governor Musgrove stated in his 2001 State of the State address that, “Our resolve to educate Mississippians must translate into sound support of our community colleges and

universities.” However, Governor Musgrove realizes that our community colleges and universities should receive students that are prepared with the skills to succeed in a higher education environment. To that point, we must invest in K-12 education to build a sound education foundation for our higher education system.

Mississippi was the first state selected by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges to host a Leadership Summit on Higher Education. Governor Musgrove chaired the steering committee that produced a report in January 2002 of six priorities for education in Mississippi, ranging from early childhood education to adult learning.

The Governor signed FY 2002 appropriation bills for community colleges and the IHL system. Governor Musgrove did not sign FY 2003 appropriation bills because the Legislature once again used inflated revenue estimates. Legislative budget recommendations were based on a growth rate of 4.3% for FY 2003 and a .7% growth rate for FY 2002, while the Governor’s recommendations were based on a realistic growth rate of 2.65% for 2003 and a –2.2% growth rate for FY 2002.

Governor Musgrove proposed the Mississippi Brain Trust in his 2003 State of the State address. The Mississippi Brain Trust would use \$200 million in bonds – \$20 million a year over the next 10 years - to develop an intellectual infrastructure. The Brain Trust will build a reservoir of professors to develop new ideas and to prepare our workforce for the highly skilled jobs of today and tomorrow. University, college, and community college research and training will aid in the recruitment and retention of the world’s best scholars. The Brain Trust will strengthen Mississippi’s intellectual capacity by endowing chairs and professors at our universities and colleges and funding graduate student assistantships; sabbaticals with business and industry; major equipment purchases; and, workforce training.

### Schools First

Governor Musgrove released his FY 04 executive budget recommendation on November 14, 2002. In preparing his budget recommendations, the Governor funded education, kindergarten through graduate level, first and then funded other agencies with remaining revenues. Governor Musgrove’s recommendations funded education at a level of \$2.4 billion, or 62% of the budget. Governor Musgrove called on the Legislature during this State of the State address to appropriate pre-kindergarten through higher education in one comprehensive bill at 62% of the general fund and to send the appropriation bill to his desk for his signature during the first month of the legislative session, rather than during the last two weeks as has been tradition.

The Legislature passed the education appropriation bills on January 31, 2003, and Governor Musgrove signed them on February 5, 2003. Funding education first builds on our successes and prioritizes our investment in the future.

## **Mississippi's Educational Accomplishments Under the Leadership of Governor Ronnie Musgrove**

Since his first election to public office as a state senator in 1987, Governor Ronnie Musgrove has worked tirelessly to improve education in Mississippi.

In the first year of his administration as governor, Musgrove began an initiative known as "Computers in the Classroom," with a mission of placing of an Internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom in the state. The National Governors Association has confirmed that Mississippi is the first state in the nation to accomplish this. According to the NGA, Mississippi is "at the head of the wave of technological innovations."

Musgrove also led the way in the passage of an ambitious teacher pay raise package which, when fully implemented, will raise the average teacher salary for Mississippi from 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation. The day after Musgrove signed the legislation, the New York Times commented in an editorial that Mississippi had put together the kind of package that continued to elude New York.

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As a member of the National Governors Association Executive Committee, Musgrove was one of two governors chosen to lead the NGA effort regarding the "No Child Left Behind" legislation recently passed by Congress. Mississippi is also one of six states to participate in Following the Leaders, a pilot program on the implementation of the mandates of the new act. In selecting Mississippi for this program, it was said that Mississippi had "an infectious enthusiasm and commitment to students."

In preparation for the reauthorization of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Nation's Governors adopted policy with the Chief State School Officers taking a strong stand in support of quality education for all students including students with disabilities. Governor Musgrove co-chaired this joint working group.

Mississippi's accountability system has been ranked nationally as one of the strongest systems in the country. A 2002 report of the *Princeton Review* ranked states based on testing programs for the schools, and Mississippi was ranked sixth in the nation. In addition, a January 29, 2003, *USA Today* article which discussed states' compliance with the requirements of No Child Left Behind, stated "of the 40 federal requirements examined by ECS (Education Commission of the States), 12 states are close to fulfilling half or more. Among the furthest along: Mississippi, Tennessee and Texas..."

Because of Governor Musgrove's leadership, education was fully funded for FY 2004 during the first month of the 2003 legislative session, was funded before other agencies' budgets, and was funded at 62% of the state budget.

Musgrove is chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board and is a member of the National Assessment Governing Board and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.

With the growth of Mississippi during a sluggish national economy, creating jobs has become a trademark of the Musgrove administration, but the education of Mississippi's children remains his personal passion.

**STATE OF THE STATE**  
**Governor Ronnie Musgrove**  
**February 9, 2000**

In education, we have laid a strong foundation. We will see the Mississippi Adequate Education Program reach its full implementation by the year 2002.

On that foundation, we must continue to strengthen our schools.

Think for a moment about the transformation occurring in DeSoto County Schools.

Last month brothers Bob Pittman, native Mississippian and founder of America On Line, and Tom Pittman, publisher of the DeSoto Times, working together with the Maddox Foundation and university and state leaders, paved the way to put a computer in every class room in DeSoto County, the second largest school district in the state.

During my campaign, I dared Mississippians to imagine computers at the fingertips of every Mississippi school child. And many said it couldn't be done. Would they now tell Tom Pittman, Bob Pittman, Robin Costa, the teachers and the students in the DeSoto County schools that it couldn't be done? No. Because it can, and we will. And, we're one step closer.

Thanks to the commitment of Bob and Tom Pittman the Maddox Foundation and the State of Mississippi, in the year 2002, we will have Internet-accessible computers in every classroom in every school in every district in every county in the State of Mississippi.

Working together, public and private, business and university, we will bring the educational opportunities of the World Wide Web to Mississippi's children.

Tom Pittman and Robin Costa, please stand and let us thank you for your commitment to Mississippi, today and tomorrow.

Thank you, Tom and Robin.

Our very future sits today in classrooms across this state listening to Mississippi's teachers. Those teachers need our support. Those teachers deserve recognition for their efforts; they deserve a fair and living wage for their labors of the heart and mind. We must take teacher pay in Mississippi to the Southeastern average.

We can reach that goal in four years by investing \$22 million dollars the first year and staggering increases over the next three years. We can do this and protect the fiscal integrity of our budget. With 5% growth in any given year, we can afford to pay our teachers what they deserve. As head of the executive branch, I will reprioritize the budget in any year when our economic growth is less than 5%.

And we will continue to find incentives for excellence in the classroom.

Rewarding teachers for meeting National Board Certification standards has been a priority for years, and that's paying off for our teachers and students. This year,

Mississippi ranked third among all 50 states for the number of teachers achieving this prestigious certification.

Today, we want to say a special thank you to the over 200 teachers who achieved this recognition, especially those who have joined us today:

1. Lori Flood, McLeod Elementary School, Jackson, MS
2. Gerry Britt, Brandon High School, Brandon, MS
3. Gwendolyn Gardner, Walton Elementary, Jackson, MS
4. Sharon Webber, Power APAC, Jackson, MS
5. Gail Hammond, Northwest Rankin Middle School, Brandon, MS

*and all the others who have joined us today.*

There's one more thing you should know. Not only did we do very well this year, Mississippi now ranks third in the nation overall. Only two states have more National Board Certified teachers than Mississippi. Our teachers are committed to excellence, and we are committed to supporting public education in the state of Mississippi.

Thank you all for your commitment to Mississippi's children and our state's future. We commend you for your accomplishments at the national level and every day in the classrooms across Mississippi.

Computers on every desk, teacher salaries at the southeastern average. These are only the beginning of what can be done to build the strongest public schools in the nation. How important is the leadership of every school to the students' success? How important is it to make sure politics doesn't bleed into the classroom?

If it's important to keep politics out of the classroom, isn't it just as important to take politics out of the leadership of our schools district?

What would happen if we were to take partisan politics out of running our schools, and finish the work of making all Mississippi school superintendents appointed? Can we elect Mississippi's school boards and appoint Mississippi's superintendents? I believe we can. I believe we should. I believe we must.

We're challenging superintendents, principals and teachers to reach new heights of accountability. We're talking about accountability by individual school rather than by school district. Other states are following Mississippi's example when it comes to demanding performance. But we haven't forgotten about the students.

Over the next few years, we will be looking at new ways to hold our students accountable and creative ways to encourage them to become even more active participants in their own education. Within the next few weeks we'll be starting a Reading Incentive program through the Governor's office.

Today I would issue the challenge to every school child in every county. Get a library card and use it. Find your public library and make friends with the librarian. We want to see every child from the First through the Twelfth Grades reading at or above grade level.

We want those children on the Governor's Reading Honor Roll. Most of all, we want Mississippi's children reading.

Melanie and I know that it takes more than money to teach a child to read. It takes imagination and commitment. This is just one way the Governor's office is going to work hand in hand with the First Lady's efforts to promote reading across our state.

Won't you help me thank Melanie for her commitment to Mississippi as she takes on the duties and responsibilities of being our state's First Lady?

We learn to read; we read to learn and we learn the rest of our lives at home and on the job. The foundation for success has been laid in education, and we're committed to taking Mississippi's schools, community colleges and universities to the next level of excellence.

It seems to me that respect for authority has waned over time. Whether we're talking about law enforcement officers, parents, teachers, or adults in general, it's time to remind our children and society what courtesy and conduct mean. Good manners are free, and they pay great dividends. Respect engenders respect. Courtesy engenders courtesy.

Let's re-enforce what many parents across this state are teaching their children at home by requiring students to address their teachers, principals, coaches and other school officials with the respectful phrases we used growing up. What's wrong with saying 'yes'sir' and no'sir?' I urge you to pass a law requiring Mississippi students to show respect to every educator while at school.



**STATE OF THE STATE**  
**Governor Ronnie Musgrove**  
**January 5, 2001**

496,588 children attend public schools in Mississippi right now. 496,588 school children are pinning tomorrow's economic success on today's educational opportunities in Mississippi's public schools. Educating our children must be our first priority.

With the 2000 education accountability bill and Dr. Richard Thompson's leadership, our schools--their administrators, faculty and students—are measuring real progress, recognizing deficiencies and rewarding excellence. Encouraging progress from the classroom, we can expect great things for our schools and more importantly for our students.

The computer technology task force's diligence and determination matched with state and private dollars will make Mississippi one of the first states in the nation to bring the Internet to every classroom. Our children can be masters over technology, using it to learn and to explore our world, while many of us with slightly grayer hair still struggle with the VCR.

Mississippi's adequate education program ensures schools can open and operate in quality facilities with quality resources for learning. Don't gut these programs and leave the counties holding the bag.

Technology and textbooks aside, our children won't learn without qualified, inspired teachers in the classroom. Mississippi's teachers continue to outshine teachers in other states. Our national board certification numbers are a resounding testament to their commitment to teaching. Removing the five percent revenue growth condition on pay increases would be a strong testament to our commitment to Mississippi's teachers.

The five percent condition on pay raises for teachers isn't a commitment; it's an excuse. Remove the five percent condition.

Mississippi's educational outlook grows brighter. Nothing less than a continued commitment to excellence will do. Nothing less than fully funding adequate education, the critical teacher shortage act, and our teacher pay plan will do. Nothing less.

Our resolve to educate Mississippians must translate into sound support of our community colleges and universities.

We are asking them to take a greater role in economic development from recruiting industries, to research and development.

If we are going to utilize our Universities to the fullest, then the Ayers Case must be settled. Twenty-five years is long enough. It is time to move on.

Educating our children must be our first priority. You have my word that I will remind you of this again and again over the next 90 days.

**STATE OF THE STATE**  
**Governor Ronnie Musgrove**  
**January 16, 2002**

In the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., it was written that the foundation of our state is found in the education of our youth. That statement still rings true in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Our commitment to the strength of that foundation is more important now than ever before. The State of Mississippi is blessed with thousands of excellent, dedicated teachers. It is important to recognize that we are a leader in nationally board certified teachers. We were the first state in the nation to offer more pay to teachers with national board certification, and it has paid off. Today, we aren't 50<sup>th</sup>, we aren't 40<sup>th</sup>, we aren't 30<sup>th</sup>, we aren't even 10<sup>th</sup> – we're 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in the number of nationally board certified teachers. For the last school year, 405 of our teachers achieved this recognition.

One of these teachers is with us here today. Lynne Cox teaches English at the Mississippi School for the Deaf. Lynne earned her certification as an Exceptional Needs Specialist – the first teacher of the deaf in the country to do so. Lynne, thank you for your dedication to your profession, to your students, and to our future.

I remember riding around on the hot, dusty roads of Tate and Panola counties in 1987, running for the state senate. My vision then was to raise teacher pay to the southeastern average. With persistence, hard work and the help of others who shared this vision, it finally happened.

In July, we committed ourselves to giving our teachers the raises they deserve. We committed to paying them as the professionals they are, and I want to thank you for making that commitment with me. We are going to recognize their contributions in classrooms around the state. The average teacher salary in Mississippi will rise from 49<sup>th</sup> in the nation to 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation when fully implemented.

Every parent in Mississippi is entitled to know their children are learning. We have raised the bar. We have instituted tough accountability measures in order to make certain that our children are receiving the highest quality education possible. Now, we must make certain we give the teachers the tools they need to succeed, and not unfunded mandates. The current allocation for school supplies will barely buy a pencil for each student. We must do better. It is our responsibility to lay the foundation for our state, and one from which we cannot retreat.

Mississippi is being recognized around the country for its forward-thinking approach in the educational arena. Michigan Governor John Engler, chairman of the National Governors Association, appointed me as one of two lead governors on the President's national education package, and as lead governor in the nation for the reauthorization of special education. From our kindergartens to our universities, we are determined to provide the best education possible for the children of Mississippi.

Because of our determination, every public school classroom in the state will have an Internet-accessible computer by the end of this year. This effort will ensure that every child in Mississippi, from Hickory Flat to Hot Coffee, has the opportunity to learn and explore the world in a way we could have never imagined in previous years.

At last week's Leadership Summit on Higher Education, representatives from government, business and education gathered to unveil an aggressive agenda. The driving force behind the agenda is the establishment of an education coordinating body comprised of the Institutions of Higher Learning, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, and the State Board of Education. We must act on this agenda quickly.

For 27 years, our state has struggled with the Ayers case. Eighteen months ago, I brought the parties involved to the table to reach a final settlement, once and for all. 27 years is too long to tie the hands of our universities. Today, that settlement is within our reach. The settlement of Ayers will be a defining moment in our state's history; let's write that definition now. I challenge you to bring it to closure by the end of this week.

The spirit, the resolve, the determination, the desire to help our people – that's why we worked hard to get to this point. That's why we didn't give up.

**STATE OF THE STATE**  
**Governor Ronnie Musgrove**  
**January 9, 2003**

The first order of business is to put our schools first, because we know that communities with good public schools attract good jobs. Everybody benefits from good schools.

My first priority is protecting education and Mississippi's future. I presented a comprehensive plan for education in Mississippi, a plan that has seen success and still sees opportunity.

Teacher pay is rising. Our students' test scores are up, and 62 percent of our high school graduates are going to college. Better teachers, better scores - we know that investing in education works.

Mississippi is the first state in the nation to place an Internet-accessible computer in every kindergarten through 12th grade public school classroom. More than 32,000 classrooms across Mississippi are now wired and connected to the world wide web.

Our students - regardless of their location or economic status - have access to the greatest information resource in the history of the world.

These initiatives have been successful, and have brought positive national attention to Mississippi.

We will continue to transform our plan into realities for the people of Mississippi. We should not end this work until it is complete. We know what's been successful; let's talk about the plan for the opportunities ahead of us.

In 1982, kindergarten became a cornerstone of the Education Reform Act. In 2003, I want to take it to the next step.

The Summer Start program would bring the kids to the classroom two months before, and continuing two months after, their kindergarten year. Taught by qualified kindergarten teachers, this program would give our kids a running start for the schoolhouse door.

Summer Start will reduce drop-out rates, increase the skills of our future workforce, and ultimately save the state millions. Giving our children the opportunity to succeed - giving them a good education - still remains the best hope for lifting us to greater heights.

Education is not only the concern of the parents and grandparents. It's a community concern. People want to live in a good community. Good schools attract good jobs, which build good communities.

Our children need every opportunity to learn, and that opportunity extends beyond the bell at the end of the day. Thousands of students around our state return to empty houses after school.

In 1995, we enacted the successful Support Our Students program to help meet this need. Children are learning through this initiative. In 2003, it's time to expand it from 19 sites to more than 250 sites around the state.

The demands on our children in the 21st century require more than we've been doing. It's not an easy time to be a kid - and we have a responsibility to our children to make sure they have the tools to succeed in demanding times.

Our universities and community colleges are strong resources for high school graduates and adult learners alike. They offer our people the skills and the learning they need to get a job and our industries the talent to get the job done. Higher education has a critical role to play in bringing jobs to Mississippi.

That's why I've called for the creation of a \$200 million "Brain Trust" for our universities and community and junior colleges. Under this plan, bonds would be issued - \$20 million a year for 10 years - to recruit and retain the very best minds for research, development, and workforce training. We know this is the type of investment that creates more high-paying jobs for our people.

My budget invests 62 percent of the general fund in education. This enhances our future; anything less shortchanges it. I'm fighting to increase funding for education, and the people of Mississippi need you to join the fight with me. The beaten path is not always the best. The status quo is simply not good enough.

I am calling on you to appropriate pre-kindergarten through higher education in one comprehensive bill, and at 62 percent of the general fund. Pass it, put it on my desk and I'll sign it - and I don't mean the last week of March, I mean the third week of January.

Let's prove to the people of Mississippi we care about our schools. Let's prove to them that when it comes to education, we mean business - and business means jobs.

Late last month, I was with a kindergarten class at Casey Elementary School, a National Blue Ribbon school here in Jackson. The children in the class gave me a book containing letters they had written.

One letter from a young girl reminded me again of the reason why we work so hard for their future. Her simple message was "thank you for helping us learn."

For her and for all young people across our state, we must make the necessary investments. If we shortchange our investment in education, we shortchange her future - our future - and that's not an alternative I'm willing to accept.

Give to Lisa:  
This paper  
LBR v. GBR FY 01 – 04 spreadsheet  
support pack