

MEMO

To: Catherine Finley, Policy Liaison
From: Kelly Riley, Policy Liaison
Date: September 19, 2000
Subject: Questions for Governors' Roundtable on Education

Please see Mississippi's responses below. Please contact me at 601-359-2528 if you have any questions. Thank you.

What are the key issues currently with respect to teacher shortages, recruitment and retention in your state?

Teacher pay continues to be a critical component for recruiting and retaining top quality teachers. Mississippi has experienced critical shortages of licensed teachers around the state. In addition to resolving salary issues, the Governor is committed to improving the overall teaching environment.

Please describe the key legislative and policy actions undertaken to address the issues described above during the last biennium.

As Lieutenant Governor, Ronnie Musgrove's leadership led to the establishment of mentoring programs for new principals and teachers, scholarships for assistant teachers wanting to pursue bachelor's degrees, critical needs teacher shortage act which includes mortgage assistance, new schools renovated facilities, and complete implementation of "Tech Prep" sites.

As Governor, Ronnie Musgrove has promoted a successful education agenda. On May 1st, Governor Musgrove signed HB 1134 that provides for a \$337.9 million plan to raise Mississippi teacher pay to the Southeastern average. Mississippi's teachers will start seeing larger paychecks during the 2001-2002 school year. Mississippi's teacher pay average will go from the present \$31,900 to the predicted Southeastern average of approximately \$41,000.

Governor Musgrove has also launched a nationally-recognized initiative to make Mississippi the first state to have an Internet-accessible computer in every public classroom by the end of 2002. This initiative incorporates assistance from local

communities, school districts, private foundations, business leaders, and education professionals. 6,000 computers will be purchased and installed during the 2000-2001 school year.

What are the key emerging issues (next three to five years) in your state with respect to these issues?

Mississippi's key emerging issues are 1) continuing to focus on attracting and retaining top-quality education personnel, 2) improving the classroom environment so teachers have better educational tools and materials to use in enhancing the educational experience of our students, and 3) providing better educational preparation for our children before they enter the classroom.

Please identify the key legislative proposals or policy actions you expect to undertake in the coming year(s) to address these issues.

Please identify any approaches/issues/legislation your governor might want to share with his colleagues at the session.

Governor Musgrove looks forward to discussing the Mississippi Adequate Education Program and the Critical Teacher Shortage Act

Please identify the issues/legislation/solutions your governor would most like to learn about or have discussed at the session.
