

Regional Meeting for the Commission on the Senior Year

Welcome

Tuesday, February 6, 2001

11:00 a.m.

Central High School

Talking Points

- In June 2000 the U.S. Department of Education, with the support of three private foundations created the National Commission on the High School Senior Year.
- This commission is examining students' experiences in the last year of high school and recommending ways to better prepare them to continue their education or to enter the workforce.
- We are proud that Mississippi could host the first of five regional meetings that will study ways to improve the senior year as a transition to post secondary education and the work force.
- It is so important that we help our students realize the educational and career opportunities that await them.

- It is also important that our students begin preparing early to continue their educations or begin their careers.
- Often times students approach their senior year as a time to reflect on their high school experience rather than a time to prepare themselves for the future.
- I am proud to say that Mississippi has already taken steps to help our students plan ahead.
- We know there is a need to change the way we educate our students.
- We have to stay ahead of the curve as we look for new and creative ways to teach our children.
- Our students must have access to the tools and information they need to be successful when they leave school.
- Through the School-to-Careers initiative we are helping Mississippi students prepare for specific careers by giving them the opportunity for first-hand knowledge, on-site experience and at-their-fingertips information.

- In September 2000 we launched the www.fastforwardMS.com website.
- This website allows students – from kindergarten to college age and beyond – realize the world of career opportunities that await them.
- It gives students, parents, educators and counselors information about possible educational and career paths.
- It also has information on financial aid, colleges and even highlights Mississippians and their educational and career choices.
- The Schools-to-Careers program also provides students job-shadowing opportunities so they can experience a career first hand.
- Teachers can even take part in apprenticeships and internships in a variety of careers so they know what skills their students will need to get good jobs.

- Having that hands-on knowledge gives our teachers an advantage that can be passed on to our students.
- Today's conference will help us look at other ways to reach our students, and give them the tools they need to successfully continue their education and enter the workforce.
- We welcome the parents, educators, business leaders and concerned Mississippians who are here today.
- You share a deep passion for education improvements in Mississippi, and we thank you for your commitment.
- Educating Mississippi's children is our top priority.
- And every child must have the opportunity for a quality education that will lead to a great quality of life in their future.