■ recognize Beth Cochran

■ Want to visit with you about Mississippi, where we're headed and the roles you can play in getting us there

■ Lots of challenges before us
- o Turning challenges into opportunities

■ This work demands leadership
- o Must be proactive, not reactive
- o Must come from all levels, from student council to governor's office

■ One of two governors in nation working on "No Child Left Behind"
- o Also worked to reauthorize special education legislation / IDEA

■ Great progress being made in education
- o Teacher pay
- o Computers in Classroom
  - ▪ NGA: MS at head of wave of technological innovations
  - ▪ First state in nation to do this

■ MS students taking leadership role in this effort
- o Building nearly 1,000 computers from scratch

■ MS one of six states in "Following the Leaders" project
- o Reflection of role with "No Child Left Behind"

■ Work in education is broad, but has focused goal
- o Quality education means quality jobs

■ That's another area where leadership is making a difference
- o Mississippi being recognized as a leader

- Focusing on creating quality, high-paying jobs for people
    - Want / need you to stay in MS
    - Continue the work we're doing now

- By turning challenges into opportunities, we're growing MS
    - This state is open for business
    - 47,000 new jobs / 21,000 from existing businesses
    - $12.9 billion invested

- MS one of top ten states in nation for small business survival
    - 54,000 small businesses in MS

- We've got goals for the future / on target with those goals
    - Need to maintain the momentum
    - Need for you to take on leadership role in schools / communities

- Many more challenges ahead of us
    - Help us turn them into opportunities

■ Simple definition of a leader: someone who knows where he or she wants to go, gets up and goes
  o Confident you know where you want to go

■ Appreciate the work you're doing now in school
  o Excited about work you'll do in years to come
  o Excited about difference you'll help make for MS