

Remarks for
2003 MS Association of School Administrator
Annual Education Conference
October 6, 2003

- Recognize:
 - Dr. Earl Watkins
 - Dr. Buddy Pender
 - Mike Vinson
 - Toody Bird

- It's great to be here with you today
 - One of the favorite parts of my job, meeting with the very people who influence all of our futures for generations to come

- H.W. Lewis said, "Those who are unwilling to invest in the future haven't earned one."

- I'm standing here before you today saying
 - Mississippi isn't afraid to invest in its future
 - Historic action of fully funding education first
 - Way it should always be

- Mississippi is earning its future
- And, Mississippi is reaping the rewards of those investments already

- Are test scores are improving
 - We announced that with our State Accountability system, more than 80% of Mississippi public schools have achieved a rating of Level 3/ Successful or higher
 - Under the federal NCLB accountability system, 50% of MS schools met the Adequate Yearly Progress requirements for
 - NCLB score: Alabama – 33%, Delaware – 43%, Tennessee – 53%, and Florida 13%

- Mississippi has its priorities straight
 - Educating and investing in our children today for dividends tomorrow

- Children in this state are our most valuable resource

- They may only be 1/3 of our population, but they are **ALL** of our future

- My parents always taught us the importance of having a good education
 - It can take you anywhere/ it can open any door
 - With a good education there are no limits to what **YOU** can accomplish

- I'm a living testament to that
 - I'm from a town many of you probably have never heard of (TELL YOUR STORY)
 - Yet, I became a senator (first made education a priority), Lt. Governor and now Governor

- Some other states are willing to compromise when it comes to education- but Mississippi isn't one of them

- Public schools are the cornerstones of our communities and the key to a successful economy

- Together we have accomplished a lot, and it hasn't been easy
 - Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - Alabama, Texas and Florida are raising taxes and Arkansas is cutting services

- Mississippi has refused to follow
- Mississippi is now recognized as a leader in education
 - Teacher pay/ 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Computers in the Classroom
 - 6th in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers

- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education

- Serious about giving our children every advantage we can/ so they can compete on the national level
- The recent successes we have had in education would not have been possible with the cooperation and input of everyone here today
- Let's keep up the good work
- Together we can make Mississippi even better