

Future Business Leaders of America – State Leadership Conference
Thursday, April 19, 2001
10:00 a.m.
The Clarion Hotel

(Message: 5-10 minutes on more opportunities for Mississippians,
especially for our children)

Opening

- Good Morning
- (Neal White, FBLA State President, will introduce you)
- (First Grade Story)

Main Points

1. Education
 - a. Is our #1 priority
 - i. And needs to be every political leader's #1 priority in our state.
 - b. Every success story in MS hinges on a quality education and education system
 - c. We must continue to support education.
 - d. Even with a slowing economy, we must continue to have strong schools and good jobs for our people.
 - e. There is no excuse for failing to make education our top priority.
 - i. Change in our state will happen because of public education.

- ii. (Young Man Singing Story – be ready for changes in Mississippi, in the world).
- iii. A good education is your best weapon.
- f. I will be relentless in the fight for education.
- g. We have worked hard this past year to make improvements in education.
 - i. Teacher Pay Raise to Southeastern average
 - 1. From 49th to 19th in the nation.
 - ii. Teacher accountability plan
 - iii. Computers in the Classroom
 - 1. More than half way to our goal of placing an Internet-accessible computer in every classroom.
 - iv. www.FastForwardMS.com
- h. Our teachers are committing to our students
 - i. We must stop making excuses and commit to our teachers.
 - ii. National Board Certified Teachers
 - 1. Consistently ranking in Top 5%

2. Opportunities

- a. Mississippians now, more than ever, have many opportunities from which to choose.
- b. Better opportunities in:
 - i. Education
 - ii. For jobs

- c. Education and economic development go hand in hand.
- d. A state must have trained employees for potential new businesses.
 - i. High-tech companies must have high-tech employees.
 - ii. Mississippi has these people, and we are continuing that training.
 - iii. We are investing in good jobs for our people
 - 1. Nissan Motor Company
 - a. Is only the beginning.
- e. Give our people the opportunity for an even **better** Quality of Life
- f. Mississippi must invest.
 - i. The key is prioritizing and investing our money in the right places.
 - ii. We (you) must take advantage of all opportunities to make a difference.

3. Mentoring Program

- a. The Statewide Mentoring Initiative is a positive and important way to influence the lives of Mississippi's children by fostering positive educational and life goals.

- b. Our job is to offer leadership by establishing a Leadership Council that will create a strategic plan for mentoring.
- c. We are not pitting one program against another. We are here to pull them together to help children of Mississippi.]
- d. Research shows that students involved in a mentoring program are less likely to start using drugs, less physically violent, more interested in their school work, achieve better grades and develop positive relationships with their peers and parents.
- e. We are working closely with the National Mentoring Partnership to formalize our alliance.
- f. Our Mentoring Initiative will focus on developing structured, one-on-one relationships that focus on the needs of the student
- g. Our success – the future success of Mississippi’s children – depends on the number of dedicated mentors that choose to make a difference in the lives of our children.
- h. That is my challenge today to the men and women across the State of MS – we need you to step forward and volunteer to serve

the children of your community – of your city – of your country

- i. The best way to strengthen Mississippi's future is to invest in our students.
- j. And we are creating a program that will help our young people grow, prosper and reach their full potential.
- k. We are excited about what this program can do for our children and the future of the State of MS.

Closing

- You can make a tremendous impact on our world
- The future is Bright!
- One person CAN make a difference.
- America's State of Promise.