

*Remarks for the
ICS, Inc., Project Head Start
June 7, 2003*

- Recognize Arvern Moore
- Appreciate the opportunity to be here with you today
 - Even more, appreciate the work you do for our children
 - It benefits all Mississippians
- Clifton Taulbert / dusty road story
 - Want to help every child in Mississippi get started down that road
- We point them in the direction they need to go through our commitment to early childhood education
 - We are focused on this
- Unique public/private partnership
 - DHS and Barksdale Reading Institute
 - 18-month needs assessment to determine exactly what we need and ways to meet those needs
- Another important factor in success is healthy kids
 - Covering more kids than ever through CHIP
 - From 500 in 2000 to more than 56,000
 - Healthy children go to school ready to learn
- We are making the most of federal matching dollars to ensure our children have access to quality health care
- The work you do in early childhood education lays the foundation for everything else we do in education
 - Making strong progress
- Many think of us as 48th, 49th, 50th in education
 - That's no longer true
 - Education is our first priority
 - Public schools are cornerstones of communities and key to success of economy.
- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay / 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in nation
 - "No Child Left Behind"
 - Computers in the Classroom

- Other states are also watching what we've done with our investment in education
 - In my State of the State address, challenged Legislature to invest in education at 62% of budget, and fund it first
 - They rose to the challenge, and I signed legislation within next 3 weeks
- We're proving to the people of Mississippi, and the rest of the nation, that we're serious about education
 - Making the investment now for dividends tomorrow
- The investment we make in early childhood education pays strong dividends
 - Sending kids to school ready to learn
 - That's the end result of the work you do and it makes a difference
- Commitment to early education lays the foundation for success in other areas
 - Job creation efforts depend on education
- Strong growth over past 3 years
 - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 53,000 new jobs
 - Total business investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion
- Opening of Nissan last Tuesday
 - Only auto plant opening in America this year
 - \$1.4 billion investment by Nissan
 - 5,300 direct jobs / 26,000 indirect jobs
- Nissan not the only evidence of growth
 - Howard Industries / 2,000 jobs
 - Northrop Grumman / 2,000+ jobs
- Not just changing economic landscape of Mississippi
 - Changing economic landscape of our people
- That new landscape offers a brighter picture for hard-working Mississippians and their families
 - Helps put food on the table / clothes on the back
 - Also helps put a roof over the head
- Most importantly, it helps make a difference in the lives of Mississippi's children
 - It gives them a better start on their way down that dusty road Clifton Taulbert wrote about
- In the end, all our work is focused on the future of Mississippi and one simple question
 - What do we want?
 - Good schools / good jobs / good communities