

- Thank you Judge Smith.
 - I know you have been instrumental in
 - Working with the students and
 - Faculty to reinforce the positive

- It's great to be here with you today
 - This is one of the best things about my job
 - Meeting with young people like you

- Recognize Superintendent Dr. Pat Cooper
 - McComb High School Principal Mr. George Jordan
 - Denman Junior High Principal Mrs. Ruby Husband
 - Mrs. Betty Wilson – Head of Business and Technology Complex
 - Tuesday Abraham – School Attendance Counselor and head of the Positive Incentive Program

- Businesses and individuals who have contributed to the Positive Incentive Program
- I'd like to congratulate every student here
- Denman Jr. High is rated as a Level 4, exemplary school
 - under MS Accountability System (made performance goal or exceeded growth expectation)
- McComb High School is rated as a Level 3, successful school
 - under MS Accountability System (made performance goal or met growth expectation)
- Both schools met Adequate Yearly Progress under No Child Left Behind- in the areas of math and reading
- You are 1/3 of the population, yet you are **ALL** of our future

- If you think about it in those terms/ you're all under a lot of pressure and you have great expectations to live up to

- I know it gets hard some time and you may want to give up/ I know I was a teenager once
 - The key though is not to quit, but to persevere
 - Don't let anything - whether its drugs or questionable behavior stop you from reaching your goals and your full potential

- 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, Lt. Governor and now Governor
- Franklin D. Roosevelt said, “The school is the last expenditure upon which America should be willing to compromise.”
- Some other states are willing to compromise- but Mississippi isn’t one of them
- I believe in you
 - your parents believe in you
 - your teachers
 - and your counselors believe in you
- We’re showing our belief in you by keeping sight of our priorities
 - Education and Job Creation
 - What I’ve focused on the last three years as governor
 - Public schools are the cornerstones of our communities and the key to a successful economy

- We've accomplished a lot, but it hasn't been easy
 - Every state impacted by national recession
 - More than \$7 trillion lost in stock market
 - June 2003 Report from Bureau of Labor Statistics: 9.4 million Americans out of work- NAFTA 41,000 to Mexico
 - Alabama, Texas and Florida are raising taxes and Arkansas is cutting services

- Mississippi has refused to follow

- Image of Mississippi in 2003 far different than the image most know
 - Moving faster than anyone else into the 21st century
 - Competing and leading in the global marketplace
 - Setting new standards for education and economic development

- Mississippi is a recognized leader in education
 - Teacher pay/ 49th to 19th when fully implemented
 - Computers in the Classroom
 - Accountability
 - Princeton Review: 12th best testing system in the nation
 - Leading other states in preparedness for “No Child Left Behind”
 - Our 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 reading/language arts and math

- NCLB score: Alabama – 33%,
Delaware – 43%, Tennessee – 53%,
and Florida 13%
- 6th in the nation in National Board
Certified Teachers
- Historic action of funding education
first
- We're proving to the people of Mississippi,
and the rest of the nation, that we're serious
about education
 - Serious about giving you every
advantage we can/ every advantage you
deserve to compete on the national level
- Mississippi has experienced significant
growth over the past three years

- We are aggressive about creating good paying, quality jobs for all Mississippians
 - Over 2,200 new and expanded facilities
 - More than 56,000 new jobs
 - Total investment in Mississippi nearly \$15 billion

- Your living in an exciting time in Mississippi with unprecedented opportunities

- Continue the good work/ it will all pay off

- Thank you for letting me talk to you here today.