

*Remarks for the
Mississippi PTA 2003 Legislative Conference
January 8, 2003*

- Recognize dignitaries – Mary Sloan,
possible Rod Paige and Shirley Igo

- Excited to have PTA in town for legislative
session
 - Work of this group more important than
ever
 - We're facing obstacles / have to turn
them into opportunities

- National recession affecting the states
 - Can't slow us from work we have to do
 - Have to prepare now for a better day

- Three years ago, came into office with a
comprehensive plan for Mississippi
 - That plan has been working well

- Teacher pay raise

- Princeton Review says testing 6th best in nation
 - Test scores are up
- Top 10 in nationally board certified teachers
- More high school graduates going on to college / 62% / top 10 in nation according to SREB
- 1st state in nation to put Internet-accessible computer in every one of 32,354 public classrooms
- Have done much / time to do more with that plan
- Last November presented budget that invests 62% in education
 - Need your help in getting it passed
 - Shortchange investment in education, shortchange future
 - Not an acceptable alternative

- Budget also includes \$200 million for “brain trust”
 - \$20M over 10 years to recruit and retain best minds for higher education
 - Research and development key to economic development
 - We’ve invested in buildings / time to invest in people

- Answer to budget question lies in setting priorities
 - Education is number one / always has been, always will be

- Thank you for your help with this effort
 - Let’s work together / build a better MS for everyone