

Remarks for  
American Education Week  
“An Evening Honoring Excellence”  
Wednesday, November 19, 2003

- Recognize:
  - Beverly Sanders (MAE president)
  
- It is a honor to be here this evening in a room full of men and women who care as much about education as I do
  
- This is one of the greatest parts of my job
  - meeting the people who seek to influence, motivate, and inspire our children to greatness
  
- have the power to influence our students today
  - all of our futures for generations to come

- Public schools are the cornerstones of our communities
  - The key to a successful economy
  
- Good schools lead to good jobs / good jobs lead to better communities / good communities lead to an even better Mississippi
  
- H.W. Lewis said, “Those who are unwilling to invest in the future haven’t earned one.”
  
- Mississippi isn’t afraid to invest in its future
  
- And, we are already reaping some of the rewards

- Without dedicated teachers we would not be enjoying some of our successes in education
  - Historic action of fully funding education first
  - That is the way it should always be
  - Test scores are improving
    - Just last week the results of the 2003 National Assessment of Educational Progress scores came out
      - Our eighth graders math scores are up 12 points compared to the nations score which is only up 10 points
      - Our fourth graders math scores are up 7 points compared to the nations score which is only up 4 points

- 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
  
- 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 can be accomplished

- It is vital that our children know that they have people behind them, supporting them, and people who are willing to go to bat for them and their futures
  - They see that when the entire community becomes involved in their education process
  
- We've accomplished a lot, and it hasn't been easy
  
- Mississippi has refused to follow other states when they have cut their school weeks and cut funding for schools

- Together we have refused to compromise on our children's future
  
- Mississippi is now recognized as a leader in education
  - Teacher pay / 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> / when fully implemented
  - Computers in the Classroom
  - 6<sup>th</sup> in the nation in National Board Certified Teachers
  - Princeton Review: Mississippi has 12<sup>th</sup> best testing system in nation
  - Mississippi is 6<sup>th</sup> in 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 / and so one day they can proudly lead Mississippi
  
- The recent successes we have had in education would not have been possible without the cooperation and input of everyone here today
  
- But, we cannot slack up / we cannot turn back now



- It is up to everyone here today to continue to carry the torch- you all have to fight for education / our children / and their futures
  
- They are counting on you/ their parents are counting on you/ and I am counting on you
  
- I will still be here to help in the fight for education in whatever role I can, but ultimately it up to **YOU**
  
- Let's keep up the good work