

6,325 Internet-accessible computers are being installed in schools across the State of Mississippi. “We dared Mississippians to imagine computers at the fingertips of every Mississippi school child, and we are more than half way to meeting our goal,” said Governor Musgrove.

The Governor set a goal to place an Internet-accessible computer in every public elementary and secondary classroom in Mississippi by the end of 2002, and charged the members of the Classroom Technology Task Force with the job of accomplishing this goal.

The computers, supplied by six different companies, were offered at substantial discounts, and vendors provided value-adds such as web sites, educational software and teacher training at no cost to the state or local school.

The selection of the schools was based on three criteria. Number one, they had to apply. Number two, the school was wired for Internet services, and number three, the teachers of each school agreed to participate in teacher training on the use of the Internet.

The Mississippi Department of Education surveyed schools to determine the number of classrooms with computers and Internet connections in May 2000. Of the 30,033 public classrooms in Mississippi, there were 12,602 classrooms without a computer and 6,871 classrooms without an Internet connection.

“By placing these computers in classrooms across our state, we are giving teachers another tool to enhance the learning environment for our children,” said the Governor. “We are giving our students the means to open doors that provide countless learning opportunities for them.”

The installation of these computers is possible because of a strong public/private partnership. “The members of the Task Force are to be commended for their fundraising efforts that are helping us place these computers in Mississippi classrooms,” said Musgrove. Governor Musgrove and Carolyn Shanks, CEO and President of Entergy Mississippi are kicking off a campaign to secure the funds needed to install the remaining computers.

“We are on track to make Mississippi the first state in the nation to have a computer in every classroom,” said Governor Musgrove. He is asking the task force to double and triple their efforts to raise the funds needed for the remaining computers.

“It is a great feeling to know that we are right on schedule to complete our goal by the end of 2002. More Mississippi students will have access to a wider base of information and learning with each computer we install,” said the Governor.