

Since his first election to public office as a state senator in 1987, Governor Ronnie Musgrove has worked tirelessly to improve education in Mississippi.

In the first year of his administration as governor, Musgrove began an initiative known as “Computers in the Classroom,” which will place an Internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom in the state. The National Governors Association has confirmed that Mississippi will be the first state in the nation to accomplish this when the program is completed in December 2002. According to the NGA, Mississippi is “at the head of the wave of technological innovations.”

Musgrove also led the way in the passage of an ambitious teacher pay raise package which, when fully implemented, will raise the average teacher salary for Mississippi from 49th to 19th in the nation. The day after Musgrove signed the legislation, the New York Times commented in an editorial that Mississippi had put together the kind of package that continued to elude New York.

In January 2002, Musgrove hosted a Leadership Summit on Higher Education. Mississippi was the first state selected by the Association of Governing Boards of Universities and Colleges, and Musgrove chaired a committee that produced a report of six priorities for education in Mississippi, ranging from early childhood education to adult learning.

As a member of the National Governors Association Executive Committee, Musgrove was one of two governors chosen to lead the NGA effort regarding the “No Child Left Behind” legislation recently passed by Congress. Mississippi is also one of six states to participate in a pilot program on the implementation of the mandates of the new act. In selecting Mississippi for this program, it was said that Mississippi had “an infectious enthusiasm and commitment to students.”

An August report of the Princeton Review ranked states based on testing programs for the schools, and Mississippi was ranked sixth in the nation.

In his executive budget recommendation for the 2004 fiscal year, Musgrove puts “Schools First” with a budget that spends 62 percent on education. Included in his budget is a \$200 million “brain trust,” a commitment of \$20 million a year over 10 years, to be used to recruit and retain the best minds for research and development at Mississippi’s institutions of higher learning.

Musgrove currently serves as chairman of the Southern Regional Education Board.

With the growth of Mississippi during a sluggish national economy, creating jobs has become a trademark of the Musgrove administration, but the education of Mississippi’s children remains his personal passion.