

*Remarks for the  
Entergy/Computers in the Classroom Press Conference  
December 11, 2001*

Good afternoon. Making sure our children have the tools today to compete in the world tomorrow is a priority of my administration.

We have made our commitment to the teachers who help shape their lives through the work in the classroom. We're going to pay them as the professionals they are, and lift our average teacher salary from 49<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> in the nation.

To ensure our children have the technological skills the new economy demands, we are providing tools through the “Computers in the Classroom” initiative.

Under this ambitious program, we are working to place an internet-accessible computer in every public school classroom in the state.

Every child, from the most rural area to the largest city, will have access to the same information and technology available through the internet.

This initiative is being driven by a unique public-private partnership. With the support of the Public Education Forum as managed by the Mississippi Economic Council, all administrative costs are covered – so all monies raised go directly to the purchase and installation of computers.

I'd like to thank Blake Wilson and Peggy Howard for their good work in this effort.

Today, however, we are here for an exciting announcement from the Finance Committee chairman of the “Computers in the Classroom” initiative.

Carolyn Shanks of Entergy has been leading the fundraising efforts around the state for this program, and I am grateful for the commitment she has made to the children of Mississippi.

Her dedication to the project is unquestioned, and her work is making a great difference in the lives of our children.

I'd like to ask her to step up and share her good news with us now. Carolyn?