

January 3, 2003

«Title» «First» «Last»
«Organization»
«Address»
«City», Mississippi «Zip»

Dear «Title» «Last»:

Thank you for your support of education in Mississippi. With the growth of Mississippi during a sluggish national economy, creating jobs has become a trademark of my administration, but the education of Mississippi's children remains my personal passion.

We've made great progress in education. It's time to step up our commitment to continue to make a difference for the future of this state, and the future of our children. My Fiscal Year 2004 budget funds education at a level of \$2.4 billion, which is 62 percent of the total budget. My budget fully funds the third year of the teacher pay raise, it fully funds the Mississippi Adequate Education Program, it enhances resources for the support of our community and junior colleges, and it addresses the exodus of our talented professors and teachers from our universities and colleges.

As you know, it is the Legislature's responsibility to appropriate money. My budget provides \$310 million more for education than the Legislature's Fiscal Year 2004 recommended budget. Our legislators must understand the importance of fully funding education at all levels. We have to give our schools, colleges, and universities the tools for success, not unfunded mandates. If we shortchange education, we shortchange our future. Please share your support for education with your legislators and encourage them to fully fund education.

Thank you again for your support of Mississippi's future – our students.

Very truly yours,

RONNIE MUSGROVE

RM: klr