

*Remarks for the
Public Education Forum Task Force on Teacher Quality
February 18, 2003*

- Recognize Den Knecht, Peggy Howard, Dr. Phyfa Eiland, Dr. Henry Johnson, Cecil Brown

- It's a good time for education in Mississippi
 - Two weeks ago, signed historic education funding bill
 - Others cutting education, we put children first
 - Historic action, historic time

- Investing in education at 62 percent of budget
 - Investment in our people, our potential, our future

- Recommendations in this report are far-reaching and exciting
 - Focus on taking teaching to the next level
 - That's good for Mississippi

- Report addresses wide array of topics, including
 - Compensation / recruitment and retention / professional development

- Pleased to see focus on relationship between education and economic development
 - Report specifically calls for development of “a partnership among economic and educational agencies and organizations to promote Mississippi as a desirable place to live, learn and work”
 - That’s how we build good schools, good jobs, good communities

- We’ve had many successes, but there is still more work to be done
 - We’ve taken obstacles and turned them into opportunities, but we can’t rest on our accomplishments

- Proud of the broad range of expertise that contributed to this report
 - Individuals from education / business / government
 - All brought specific talents and insights
 - Thank the members of the Task Force for their service

- Together, we are setting a standard for other states to follow