

Sunday, July 4, 2010
The Clarion-Ledger
Jackson, Mississippi

Musgrove: Right man for tough job

The architect of Mississippi's basic education funding formula – the Mississippi Adequate Education Program – has been chosen to lead an important national education commission in work that is of vital interest to Mississippi.

Former Gov. Ronnie Musgrove has been named chairman of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) High School Achievement Commission.

The new national high school achievement commission aims to increase awareness of 12th graders' academic preparedness for higher education and job training, keys to success in an increasingly competitive global economy.

The National Assessment Governing Board – an independent bipartisan body that sets policy for NAEP – selected Musgrove for the task. Musgrove will join eight other commission members in studying and disseminating results of the board's program of research about preparedness in reading and math.

The research is conducted in connection with NAEP, also known as "the Nation's Report Card," the only continuing, representative assessment of what the nation's students know and can do.

"The NAEP research will provide a key indication of 12th grade preparedness in the United States," said Musgrove. "Our goal is to clearly and effectively communicate this vital information to the public, policymakers, educators, and potential employers so they can use it in shaping education and workforce training policy and practice."

As Senate Education Committee chairman, as the state's lieutenant governor and as governor, Musgrove pursued improving public education with more passion than any governor since William Winter – and had more concrete accomplishment as well.

MAEP was a collaboration between many talented legislators – including the late Sen. Gray Ferris, D-Vicksburg, Sens. Hob Bryan, D-Amory and Bennie Turner, D-West Point, and current House Speaker Billy McCoy, D-Rienzi.

But it was Musgrove's leadership that made the difference. MAEP was an historic educational benchmark in Mississippi and the first solid step toward equity in education funding.

Musgrove is uniquely qualified to lead this national effort – one that holds promise for the nation but particularly for states like Mississippi where the gap between student achievement and educational attainment is so very wide. The future of jobs in Mississippi depends on improving public education. Musgrove gets that.