Legislature Set to Convene  
posted 12/30/09
The Mississippi Legislature is set to convene at noon on Tuesday, January 5, 2010. The Legislature will consider legislation dealing with myriad education and other issues and will draft a budget for the coming fiscal year. Sine die, the end of the legislative session, is set for Saturday, April 3, 2010. The Parents’ Campaign will track education bills and post information about the progression of those bills on this website.

Legislative Budget Recommendation Released  
posted 12/15/09
The Joint Legislative Budget Committee (LBC) announced today its recommended budget for Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11). The LBC budget recommends that the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) be funded at 5.9% below the FY10 (current year) appropriation. It recommends FY11 funding for most state agencies at approximately 10% below FY10 appropriated levels. School districts are currently operating at about 4.9% below the FY10 appropriated level due to budget cuts. The LBC budget, often referred to as the Legislative Budget Recommendation, or LBR, is generally thought of as the baseline budget, or starting place, for the budget negotiations that will begin when the Legislature convenes in January.

School District "Dashboard Reports" Released  
posted 12/15/09
The Mississippi Department of Education has released local school districts' "Dashboard Reports," a requirement of the Children First Act of 2009. The report provides a profile of the school district as well as student achievement and financial information. Click here to find your district's Dashboard Report and to compare it to the Dashboard Reports of other school districts. The Children First Act requires that districts post on their websites a link to their reports, print and provide free of charge copies of the report at the district office and at each of the district's schools, and publish a copy of the report in the local newspaper.

TPC Response to Governor Barbour's Executive Budget Recommendation  
posted 12/15/09
The Parents' Campaign has been studying the elements of Governor Barbour's proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2011 that affect K-12 education, and we have compiled information that we believe is helpful in understanding the effects - both positive and negative - that the governor's proposals could have on our children's schools. Read more.

Governor Announces Additional Budget Cuts  
posted 12/3/09
Governor Barbour announced today that he is making $54-million in additional cuts to the current-year state budget. Though MAEP was spared in this round of cuts, the Educable Child program was cut $593,000 and Vocational & Technical Education took at $1.5-million hit for a total cut to K-12 education of $2.1-million. National Board Certified Teacher supplements are not affected by these cuts. Read more.
School Accountability Ratings Released
posted 11/23/09
The Mississippi Department of Education has released the accountability ratings of Mississippi schools and school districts. Four percent of Mississippi’s schools received the highest rating of Star School and 17 percent of schools reached the next highest rating of High Performing. Both Star and High Performing schools are performing above the national average. Click here to find your schools’ and district’s accountability ratings and to learn more about the state accountability system.

Governor Proposes FY11 Budget
posted 11/16/09
On Monday, November 16th, Governor Barbour presented his budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2011, the coming fiscal year. The governor’s budget assumes a very bleak revenue picture for the coming year and includes deep cuts for state services, including education. Read more.

Column Addresses New School Accountability System
posted 11/16/09
Dr. Tom Burnham, who will take over the role of State Superintendent of Education at the first of the year, has authored a column that provides an explanation of the new school accountability rating system. School and district ratings will be announced next week, and it is important for parents to understand the new rating system and what it means for our children and our schools. Dr. Burnham points out that the difference between the old rating system and the new one is much like the difference between a state championship and a national championship. Click here to read Dr. Burnham’s column.

Dr. Tom Burnham Named State Superintendent of Education
posted 11/3/09
The State Board of Education has named Dr. Tom Burnham Mississippi’s new State Superintendent of Education. Dr. Burnham held this post from 1992 to 1997, after which he served as Superintendent of Henderson County Public Schools in North Carolina and as Dean of the School of Education at the University of Mississippi. Dr. Burnham will begin his second tenure as State Superintendent after the first of the year. We at The Parents’ Campaign extend to Dr. Burnham a hearty congratulations! We look forward to working with him. Click here to read Dr. Burnham’s biography.

School Leadership Matters
posted: 10/20/09
Good school leadership is one of the most critical factors in school success. The Principal Story, a documentary funded by The Wallace Foundation, highlights the immense challenges facing America’s public schools – and the difference a highly effective school principal can make. The film provides excellent examples of what parents should expect from the leaders of their children’s schools and what principals should strive to achieve.

Click here to view the 5-minute trailer of The Principal Story.

Click here to view the full documentary online.

Click here to “meet” the principals.

Governor Barbour Says More Cuts Coming
Updated 10/14/09
Governor Barbour announced Tuesday that additional cuts to state agencies are needed. He has not yet outlined what those cuts will be. Though virtually every state leader claims to hold public education as a priority, schools have, thus far, borne a disproportionate share of the budget shortfall burden. Read more.

Governor Barbour has frequently referred to budget cuts as "belt tightening," which sounds fairly harmless – until you know what "belt tightening" really looks like for Mississippi school children. Click here to see how Mississippi children are being affected by budget cuts.

**MS Schools Receive National Recognition**

Four Mississippi schools were recently named Blue Ribbon Schools, a national recognition honoring public and private K-12 schools that are either academically superior in their states or that demonstrate dramatic gains in student achievement. Schools must apply for the award and, once named Blue Ribbon Schools, maintain that status for 5 years. Mississippi's 2009 Blue Ribbon Schools are:

- Center Hill Elementary - DeSoto County School District
- D'Iberville Elementary - Harrison County School District
- Rankin Elementary - Tupelo Public School District
- Long Beach Middle School - Long Beach School District

Congratulations to the educators, students, and parents in these outstanding schools! Read more.

**Local School District Budget Cuts**

The Mississippi Department of Education has released a spreadsheet showing the impact of the recent budget cuts on local school districts. Click here to see how much your district will lose. Read more about how local districts are handling the funding shortfall.

**Governor Cuts School Budgets**

Governor Barbour announced today that he is cutting K-12 education 5% across the board - the maximum cut to a state agency budget that the law will allow and the most cut from any state agency - to make up for Mississippi's revenue shortfall. This amounts to a reduction in the education budget of over $100-million. Read more

See Statement from Interim State Supt. Dr. John Jordan

**Governor Calls Press Conference for Thursday**

Updated 9/2/09 4:00 p.m.

Governor Barbour has called a press conference for 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, September 3, 2009, at which time he will announce important budget information. The press conference will be webcast at [http://www.governorbarbour.com/](http://www.governorbarbour.com/).

See Facts about the State Budget and Education Funding

**Governor May Cut School Budgets**

Updated 9/2/09 2:00 p.m.

Governor Barbour has indicated recently that he intends to cut state agency budgets to address the state's revenue shortfall and that he is likely to start with K-12 education. We at The Parents' Campaign believe cutting school budgets first would be bad policy for a number of reasons, and we urge Governor Barbour to take another look at the options available to him. Read more.

**MDE Releases Information on H1N1 Swine Flu**

The Mississippi Department of Education has released information designed to help schools and parents reduce the risk of H1N1 Swine Flu.
Soft Measures of a School's Quality
State Test Scores Released

Folwell Dunbar, Louisiana's academic adviser for charter schools, writes about soft measures - indicators other than test scores that reveal a school's quality.

The Mississippi Department of Education has released the results of the MCT2 and Subject Area Tests administered last spring.

Click here to see scores by school district.

See press release from MS Dept. of Education.

In the weeks to come, schools will share with parents information about their children's individual test scores. Later this fall, schools and school districts will be rated, based on their average test scores, according to the state's new accountability rating system. It is expected that, as a result of the new, more rigorous curriculum and assessment introduced in the 2007-2008 school year, students and schools will see a drop in their ratings. As strange as it may seem, this is actually good news for our school children.

Posted 8/20/09

State Test Scores to Be Released

On Friday, August 21, 2009, the Mississippi Department of Education will make available to the public test scores from the MCT2 and Subject Area Tests that were administered last spring. In the weeks to come, schools will share with parents information about their children's individual test scores. Later this fall, schools and school districts will be rated, based on their average test scores, according to the state's new accountability rating system. It is expected that, as a result of the new, more rigorous curriculum and assessment introduced in the 2007-2008 school year, students and schools will see a drop in their ratings. As strange as it may seem, this is actually good news for our school children.

See tips for helping students succeed in school

The Parents' Campaign Welcomes Interim State Superintendent of Education

Dr. John Jordan

The Parents’ Campaign welcomes Interim State Superintendent of Education Dr. John Jordan. Dr. Jordan is replacing temporarily Dr. Hank Bounds who recently began his new post as Commissioner of Higher Education. The search for the permanent state superintendent is expected to last approximately 90 days. Dr. Jordan is well qualified to fill the vacancy in the interim, having spent more than 25 years in the education system serving in just about every capacity from classroom teacher to deputy state superintendent. We look forward to working with him to ensure that every Mississippi child has access to excellent schools.

Read more about Interim State Superintendent Dr. John Jordan.

Click here to read Dr. Jordan's column welcoming students and teachers to the new school year.

Deborah Meador Joins The Parents’ Campaign

We are pleased to announce that Deborah Meador has joined our staff as Director of Member Services and Special Programs. She brings to The Parents’ Campaign a broad knowledge of Mississippi’s public
education system at both the local and state levels as well as years of experience working with parents and community leaders.

See Press Release  Photo

Wednesday, July 01, 2009 10:00 a.m.

**Governor Signs Ed Funding Bill**

It’s official! Governor Barbour signed the education funding bill into law last night. Schools will receive full funding of the MAEP and Add-on programs as well as the National Board Certified Teacher supplement, Educable Child, and the second phase of the pay raise for teachers with more than 25 years of experience. The bill also provides $3-million to continue the High School Redesign program in districts that are already participating. It does not provide the $10-million required to expand the program to additional districts.

Many thanks are due the devoted members of The Parents’ Campaign who fought so hard to protect the integrity of our public education system.

Congratulations on a great victory!

See House Vote  

Monday, June 29, 2009 11:30 a.m.

**House and Senate Pass Education Funding Bill**

**Fully Fund MAEP**

The House and Senate have passed an education funding bill that fully funds the MAEP formula - base student cost and add-on programs - as well as the National Board Certified Teacher supplement, Educable Child, and the second phase of the pay raise for teachers with more than 25 years of experience. The bill also provides $3-million to continue the High School Redesign program in districts that are already participating. It does not provide the $10-million required to expand the program to additional districts.

This bill represents a great victory for Mississippi school children and teachers – and for the many members of The Parents’ Campaign who fought so hard for a fair and timely budget. The bill will now be sent to Governor Barbour for his signature. We are hopeful that he will sign it into law quickly so that school districts can move into the new fiscal year on Wednesday with a budget.

Click [here](#) to see The Parents’ Campaign’s postings regarding the FY10 Budget Debate during the 2009 Regular and Extraordinary Sessions.

**MDE Hosts Autism Institute**

The Mississippi Department of Education will host the Mississippi Autism Institute in Jackson on July 14–16. The workshop will focus on teaching communication skills to children with ASD and other developmental disorders. [Click here for additional information](#).

**Legislature Passes Tobacco Tax Increase**

The House and Senate have passed a 50-cent increase in the tobacco tax. The Senate vote was 40 yeas and 4 nays, and the House vote was 102 yeas and 18 nays. Some are projecting that the increased tax will generate approximately $106-million in additional revenue for the fiscal year that begins July 1. Legislators are considering a hospital tax that could generate additional revenue as well. The resolution of these potential sources of revenue will help to clarify the state’s revenue picture for the coming year and allow legislators to finalize budget bills.
Legislature Returns May 6 to Finalize Budget Bills
The Mississippi Legislature will return to Jackson on Wednesday, May 6th to finalize k-12 funding and other budget bills. We at The Parents’ Campaign will keep our members apprised of progress being made on this front through email updates. Keep watching your email inbox!

MDE Creates Swine Flu Information Website
The Mississippi Department of Education has created a website to help parents, students, teachers and school administrators respond appropriately to the threat of Swine Flu. This helpful site includes a wealth of information, including helpful tips for parents, the latest updates on the Swine Flu outbreak, and lesson plans and corresponding activities for teachers. The most important tips for parents are:

- Don't panic
- Encourage your children to wash their hands frequently and thoroughly
- Take this opportunity to talk with your children about good hygiene measures
- Explain to your children the importance of good cough hygiene (cover your cough!)
- Keep sick children home from school
- DO NOT keep children home from school if they are not sick – some of the most important academic material will be covered in the coming weeks

Click here to access MDE’s Swine Flu Information Website
Click here to view MDE’s Swine Flu Press Conference

State Testing
Mississippi students have begun taking Subject Area Tests (SATP) in Biology I, U.S. History, Algebra I, and English II. Teachers and students have worked hard to ensure that students are well prepared for these assessments which students must pass in order to graduate. Students in grades 3 - 8 will take the Mississippi Curriculum Test, Second Edition (MCT2) on May 12, 13, and 14. Click here to learn what parents, students and teachers can do to ensure that students do their best on these assessments.

Conference Committee Agrees on Cigarette Tax Increase
The Conference Committee for HB 364 has agreed to increase the tax on cigarettes by 50 cents, resulting in a total tax of 68 cents per pack. This increase is estimated to generate $30-million in additional revenue for the current fiscal year (FY09) and $112-million in additional revenue for FY10. The agreement, which must survive a vote of the full House and Senate, sets the stage for additional budget negotiations. Indications are that legislators will return to the Capitol on Wednesday, May 6th to vote on the HB 364 conference report and finalize Mississippi budget bills. State leaders continue to express their support for full funding of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), an indication of their commitment to a high quality public education system.

Tracking Federal Stimulus Funds
Governor Barbour held a Stimulus Summit on Thursday, April 16th, at which representatives from state agencies gave the public an update on federal stimulus funds. Click here for links to websites that provide information on competitive grants and other funds available through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act as well as federal stimulus funds that have been received and expended thus far.

TPC Member’s Work Noted
Susan Moen -- Coach Mo to her students -- is inspiring the students at Luther Branson Elementary School in rural Madison County to get fit, and it’s rubbing off on their families. Click here to read the remarkable story of this former marathoner and Ph.D. college professor who begged for a chance to teach Mississippi kids living in poverty.

Governor Signs Children First Act of 2009, Announces $150,000 School Improvement Grant
Governor Barbour held a signing ceremony at the Capitol to celebrate his signing into law **The Children First Act of 2009**. State Superintendent Dr. Hank Bounds proclaimed it a great day for Mississippi children, and we at The Parents’ Campaign couldn’t agree more! Governor Barbour also announced that Mississippi has been awarded a $150,000 grant by the National Governors Association to develop methods for improving chronically underperforming schools. [Read more](#).

### House and Senate Adjourn for 30 Days

The Mississippi House and Senate adjourned at noon on Wednesday, April 01, 2009, pursuant to House Concurrent Resolution 96 (HCR 96). HCR 96 calls for the House and Senate to return on or before May 4, 2009, at the joint discretion of the Speaker of the House and the Lieutenant Governor. The legislature has adjourned pending additional information about the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (federal stimulus funds) which will provide them the information needed to craft a budget that optimizes state and federal funds. We expect the Mississippi Adequate Education Program to be fully funded for the coming year and for cuts to current-year school district budgets to be restored. [See additional information](#).

### House and Senate Adopt Conference Report On Children First Act of 2009

The House and Senate have adopted the final conference report on the Children First Act of 2009 and have sent it to the governor for his signature. The final version does include the “no pass, no play” language added by the House, but the charter school provisions added by the Senate have been removed. This is a significant step toward ensuring that all Mississippi children have access to excellent schools, and we are grateful to our members and to the leadership of the House and Senate for their support of this important legislation. As of this posting, the official vote report has not been provided by the House or Senate. We will post it as soon as it is available. Posted 4:04 p.m. 3/30/09

### Mississippi Department of Education to Hold Drop-Out Prevention Conference

On Thursday, April 16, 2009, MDE will hold a Dropout Prevention Best Practices Conference. The Mississippi Department of Education invites the public to join community leaders, educators and dropout prevention team members from across the state to learn more about what is really working to prevent dropouts and improve graduation rates. This free event, made possible by funding from State Farm, includes an opening group session with keynote speakers beginning at 8:30 am, followed by specialized morning and afternoon breakout sessions for participants. This conference will include a luncheon sponsored by the Mississippi Economic Council, featuring FOX News Business Commentator Stuart Varney. Click [here](#) to learn more.
Legislature Extends 2009 Session
The House and Senate have extended the 2009 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature to give them ample time to adjust appropriations bills to reflect the $400-million downward revision in the revenue estimate. Key to the appropriations process is the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), or the federal stimulus package, and the Legislature is awaiting final word on the exact amount of those funds and how they will be directed. The House and Senate plan to wrap up work on remaining general bills by March 31, 2009, and then recess for 30 days or until sufficient information on the ARRA is available to allow a state budget to be developed. [Click here for additional information.]

Legislature Learns It Has $400-million Less to Appropriate
The Revenue Estimating Committee reported on March 20, 2009, a revision in the revenue estimates for both the current year (FY09) and the 2010 fiscal year (FY10). The Legislature is in the midst of appropriating funds for FY10. The committee reported that it has revised downward the FY09 revenue projection by $220-million and has revised downward the FY10 projection by approximately $400-million. The cuts to current-year budgets that Governor Barbour made in January were in anticipation of the downward adjustment in the FY09 projection. The revision to the FY10 forecast will, obviously, require that the Legislature take another look at each FY10 appropriations bill to make up for the $400-million difference. [Learn more.]

Senate Passes Ed Funding Bill
Still Working on Early Childhood Funding
The Senate passed its version of HB 1677, the education funding bill, providing for full funding of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) using state and federal funds. The bill technically underfunds the MAEP formula by $52-million in state-sourced funds, assuming that the remainder will come through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA or federal stimulus funds). The Senate version does not provide the $3-million the House provided for the Early Learning Collaborative Grant Program, but this funding could be included in the final version of the bill. HB 1677 is likely to go to conference where a committee of 3 members from each chamber will negotiate the final legislation - and could reinstate the early childhood funding. Please ask your senator to support Senate Appropriations Chairman Alan Nunnelee and Senate Education Chairman Videt Carmichael in their effort to reinstate the $3-million in funding for the Early Learning Collaborative Grant Program. [Click here to see the vote.]

Senate Appropriations Committee Passes Full MAEP Funding, Strips Early Childhood Funding
The Senate Appropriations Committee passed the Senate version of HB 1677, the k-12 funding bill for the next school year, making provisions to fully fund the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) for the coming school year. Though the bill appropriates state funds at a level below what is required to fully fund the MAEP, the bill passed the committee with the understanding that the remainder of the funding will be made up by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the federal stimulus package. The bill will now go to the full Senate for a vote. Unfortunately, the Senate version of HB 1677 does not include the $3-million that the House appropriated to fund the Early Learning Collaborative Grant Program. Please call your senator and ask that the $3-million for the Early Learning Collaborative Grant Program be reinstated.

Early Childhood Education Bill Approved By Governor
Senate Bill 2314 has been approved by the governor and signed into law. This bill allows school districts to use any available funds for early childhood education programs.

Early Childhood Education Bill Passes House and Senate
On a vote of 104 yeas to 18 nays, the House of Representatives passed SB 2314, the bill that allows
local school districts to use any available funds to provide voluntary early childhood education classes. The bill will now go to Governor Barbour for his signature. Click here to see the votes.

**PEER Gives Update on Federal Stimulus Package (ARRA)**

On February 26, 2009, Mississippi's Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review Committee (PEER) presented to Mississippi legislators an update on the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), the federal stimulus package. See the PEER explanation of federal funds available through ARRA.

**New School Rating System Working Its Way Through Approval Process**

The Mississippi Department of Education has developed a new system by which public schools will be rated that it is working its way through an approval process. The proposed system will allow parents and communities a better means of comparing their schools to those in other cities, states and the country than did the old model because the achievement level required to obtain the “satisfactory” rating in Mississippi will reflect what is considered “satisfactory” at the national level. The new system uses words rather than numbers to identify the 7 levels into which schools will fall: Star School, High Performing, Satisfactory, Low Performing, At Risk of Failing, Academic Watch, and Failing. Learn more.

**Former Governor William Winter and Mr. Jack Reed, Sr. Issue Statement on MAEP**

Former Governor William Winter and prominent businessman Jack Reed, Sr. have issued a statement noting the importance of maintaining full funding of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program and urging legislators’ support. Governor Winter and Mr. Reed are longtime, ardent supporters of public education and have long worked to ensure high quality schools for all Mississippi children. See statement.

**House Passes Education Funding Bill, Includes Early Childhood Ed.**

On a vote of 115 yeas to 3 nays, the Mississippi House of Representatives passed House Bill 1677, an appropriations bill that fully funds the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) and add-ons. The bill also provides funding that assumes an increase in the number of teacher supplements funded for National Board Certified Teachers and $3-million to fund the Collaborative Grant Program, funding local collaborations among public schools, Head Start and private child care centers to ensure access to high quality early childhood classes for children in local communities. The bill will now go to the Senate for a vote. See funding details. See vote.

**President Obama Signs Stimulus Bill**

President Obama has signed into law the $787-billion federal stimulus bill. It appears that the bill will provide targeted education funding for Mississippi sufficient to restore the cuts made to current-year budgets. Read analysis of stimulus bill by Mississippi Economic Policy Center.

**House Kills Early Childhood Bill on Procedural Move**

Members of the Mississippi House of Representatives used a procedural move on a deadline day to kill House Bill 616, a measure that would have allowed school districts to use existing funds to offer voluntary early childhood education classes in their districts. The bill did not require any additional funding. Rather, it allowed districts the flexibility they need to meet the needs of their youngest children so that they come to school better prepared to succeed. Currently law restricts severely the funds that may be used to offer these classes. The Senate passed unanimously an identical bill, Senate Bill 2314, and the House will now have an opportunity to act on it. See more. See vote.

**House Passes Children First Act of 2009**

The Mississippi House of Representatives has passed HB 1142, The Children First Act of 2009. This is a significant piece of accountability legislation that promises to hasten the improvement of underperforming schools so that every Mississippi child is given access to a good education.
Report Links Mississippi’s Low Income to Under-Education

In our quest to ensure that every Mississippi child has an opportunity for a bright future, our focus has been drawn repeatedly to the critical need for a better system of early childhood education. A report issued last week by the Southern Education Foundation (SEF) highlights the link between poverty and under-education – particularly under-education in the early years. See more.

Budget Cuts Go Into Effect

The 3.49% cuts to MAEP funds took effect this week as school districts’ monthly MAEP payments were reduced to reflect the cuts.

Learn how budget cuts are affecting local school districts.

Legislature Takes Up Important Accountability Legislation

The House and Senate have advanced through committee some of the most important education legislation Mississippi has seen in quite some time. The Children First Act of 2009 does exactly what the name implies – it puts children first and makes great strides toward improving low performing schools.

See more about The Children First Act of 2009

HB 1383 Passes the House

At the urging of faithful members of The Parents’ Campaign, the House of Representatives tabled the motion to reconsider House Bill 1383 (HB 1383) on a unanimous voice vote. The bill will now move to the Senate where we are hoping for prompt action. We will keep our members updated as we hear of action on HB 1383.

Motion to Reconsider HB 1383
To be Taken Up on Monday

The House of Representatives adjourned for the weekend without taking up the motion to reconsider HB 1383. The word at the Capitol is that it will be taken up on Monday. Please ask your representative to vote to table the motion to reconsider. We will keep our network members posted via email as details develop.

Sign up to receive emails from The Parents’ Campaign.

HB 1383 Passes House But Held on Motion to Reconsider

House Bill 1383, a $68-million supplemental appropriation that would restore the bulk of the recent cuts made to the MAEP, passed the House but was held over on a motion to reconsider. Please ask your representative to support tabling the motion to reconsider HB 1383 so that the bill can move forward and go on to the Senate. Click here to find contact information for your legislators. Click here to see your representative’s vote on HB 1383.

Urgent Call to Action

On Thursday, January 22, 2009, the Mississippi House of Representatives will likely vote on House Bill 1383, a $68-million supplemental appropriation that will make up the majority of cuts to school districts. Please call your representative today and ask him or her to support HB1383. Click here to see how much your district has lost in the current round of cuts. Click here to find contact information for your legislator.

Mississippi Students to Participate in National Assessment of Educational Progress

Many Mississippi students will join their peers in other states in participating in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) between January 26 and March 6, 2009. NAEP, often referred to as the
Governor Cuts MAEP
Governor Barbour has announced additional cuts to the state budget. It appears that the full education budget was cut about $87.8-million; $76.6-million of that is from the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) - a 3.49% cut to that program. The Mississippi Department of Education is working to determine the effect these cuts will have on individual school districts. We will communicate these effects to our members, along with our plan of action, as soon as it is available.

Governor Announces Plans to Cut School Budgets
In his State of the State address, Governor Barbour announced his intention to cut current school budgets. He did not announce what the amount of cuts will be. As soon as we know what the level of cuts will be, we will determine what the impact will be on local school districts and what course of action we will take to protect Mississippi's education system.

The Bolivar Commercial is Right on Target
The Bolivar Commercial has shared with readers a candid editorial describing the "Cost of Ignorance." It states that, "The dropouts from the Class of 2007, alone, will cost our state almost $3.9-billion in lost wages and taxes over their lifetime." Click here to read the editorial.

2009 Regular Legislative Session Convened on January 6
The Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature convened on Tuesday, January 6, 2009, at 12:00 p.m. Click here to view the timetable for processing legislation. Click here to go to the website of the Mississippi State Legislature.

Business Leaders Support Mississippi Building Blocks Proposal
On December 15th, the Mississippi Economic Council, Leadership Mississippi and Momentum Mississippi held a forum to educate business leaders about the "Mississippi Building Blocks" proposal, a privately-funded early childhood education plan offering resources and incentives to daycare providers to improve the quality of care and instruction provided at their centers. The Barksdale Foundation, the Phil Hardin Foundation and Chevron pledged $4.6-million in support of the plan. Nancy Loome, Executive Director of The Parents' Campaign, spoke to a crowd of over 700 people from around the state about the proposal. Click here to view Nancy's PowerPoint outlining details of Mississippi Building Blocks. Click here to visit the Mississippi Building Blocks website.

Task Force Releases "The Children First Act of 2009"
In the 2008 Legislative Session, the Legislature passed a law requiring that a task force be created to study underperforming schools in Mississippi. Since June, the task force has been meeting to study and evaluate school performance issues and school leadership and has traveled around the state visiting low-performing and high-performing schools. "The Children First Act of 2009" has been released as the task force's recommendations to the legislature. Click here to learn more.

MEC to Hold Forum
The Mississippi Economic Council, Leadership Mississippi, and Momentum Mississippi will hold a forum designed to discuss the current and future state of early childhood education in Mississippi on Monday, December 15, 2008. The forum, called the Mississippi Building Blocks, will be held at the Jackson Marriott beginning at 9:30 a.m. and is free of charge. You can register and learn more about this effort by visiting www.msbuildingblocks.ms. The registration deadline is December 11th.

Joint Legislative Budget Committee Releases Budget Recommendations

Nation's Report Card, allows us to compare the achievement level of Mississippi students to those of children in other states. Click here to learn more.
The Joint Legislative Budget Committee has released its budget recommendation for the coming fiscal year, and they have recommended that the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) be fully funded. This represents a strong show of support for public education by the members of this committee, particularly in light of these difficult economic times. They and other legislators have heard the voice of The Parents’ Campaign, and they have responded. Click here to see the Joint Legislative Budget Committee's recommended state budget.

**Subject Area Testing**
In December, high school students in some Mississippi school districts participated in the Subject Area Test Program (SATP), tests that determine their level of mastery in Biology I, English II, Algebra I, and U.S. History. These are very important tests, as students taking these courses must pass the SATP test in order to graduate. The tests will also be administered in the spring. Click here to learn more about the SATP.

**Task Force on Underperforming Schools Makes Recommendations**
The Task Force on Underperforming Schools has unveiled its recommendations for improving struggling schools and school districts. The group unveiled at a press conference The Children First Act of 2009 which includes a number of recommendations for holding school leaders accountable and otherwise improving schools.


See press release announcing task force recommendations.

See video of press conference.

**Governor Barbour Releases FY2010 Budget Recommendations**
Governor Barbour has released his budget recommendations for FY2010, and they include full funding of the MAEP. Click here to read the governor's press release.

**We Did It Again!**
Governor Barbour announced on Wednesday that MAEP will be spared in his current round of budget cuts.
We at The Parents’ Campaign applaud the governor's move to protect public schools and thus protect the wellbeing of our children and the future vitality of our state. Many members of The Parents’ Campaign, when they learned of impending budget cuts, stopped what they were doing, picked up the phone, and made a call to the governor to ask that he protect the quality of our public education system. Their calls made a difference, and our children and our state will be the better for it!

Click here to see Governor Barbour's press release.

**Governor Barbour May Cut MAEP Funding**
The Governor is asking that public schools prepare to return $50-million to the state this year. State revenue is coming in below projected amounts, and Governor Barbour has asked that state agencies - including schools - prepare to cut their budgets by 2% in the current year and by 4% next year. A 2% reduction in current year school funding totals $50-million - far more than the $2.5-million increase in MAEP funding schools received this year. Under the governor's plan, individual school districts will lose hundreds of thousands of dollars, some millions. Fully funding MAEP, then requiring that schools send $50-million back to the state, is not really fully funding MAEP. Mississippi has a clear choice: we can go back down the old, worn path of inferior education, poor-paying jobs and record unemployment, or we can forge a new future for our state. We must maintain our commitment to properly educating our children.

**School Board Elections November 4th**
Local school board elections will be held on the November 4th ballot. To find out if your zone has a
school board candidate on the ballot in the upcoming election and learn more about Mississippi school boards click here.

TPC Reaches Membership Goal
TPC membership has risen over the 50,000 mark thanks to our many dedicated volunteers who worked tirelessly to involve their communities in our efforts. We appreciate each of our members and look forward to our future work together to improve public schools for all Mississippi kids! Click here to read our news release.

Appearances Can Be Misleading
Many parents assume incorrectly that a school’s quality can be judged by the appearance of its students. See an article on “The Bowhead Factor” — the myth that schools with kids from more affluent families consistently offer better quality than schools with more diverse populations.

MCT2 & Subject Area Test Scores Released by MDE
The Mississippi Department of Education has released individual school districts’ scores on the MCT2 and SATP tests that were administered last spring. You can find your district's scores by grade level by clicking here and choosing your school district. As our children and teachers do the challenging work of improving achievement, parents and communities must do our part to support them. Learn how you can help by clicking here.

MCT2 & Subject Area Test Scores Coming Soon
In the next few weeks, school districts will be sharing with us our children's test scores from the MCT2, Algebra I, and English II tests that were administered last spring. As we process this information, there are some important points to remember... more

TPC Membership Continues to Soar
Thanks to the enthusiastic work of our local volunteers, The Parents' Campaign membership has risen to over 48,000! Our goal of 50,000 is well within our reach, and a little of your time could push us over the top. If you would like to volunteer, email Serenity Albright at salbright@msparentscampaign.org, and she will provide you everything you need to make this a quick and effective process.

See more updates here.