Education Advocates Discuss the Importance of Educating Children Even in Tough Economic Times

BY LAWAYNE CHILDREY | PUBLISHED 22 FEB 2013 07:11PM | 0 COMMENTS


Approximately 32 percent of Mississippi children live in poverty. But experts say education can result in a better quality of life. As MPB's Lawayne Childrey reports education advocates stress the importance of educating children even in these tough economic times.

During a KIDS COUNT summit in Jackson Friday Gregory Poindexter talked about his drive to become a news reporter.

"I know how to video shoot, edit, writing stories, the whole none yards. But it takes a lot of commitment especially if you want to make a career out of it."

The 17 year old senior from Murrah High School in Jackson says he already has a plan of action to help him reach his goal.

"Well how this economy is looking right now if you don't have at least a bachelors degree nine times out of ten you won't do as good in life. So I plan to major on education and probably minor in something like criminal justice and hope to do investigative journalism."

But in a time of big budget deficits fewer dollars are being pumped into the educational system. That often means fewer opportunities for students to get a quality education. Youth advocate and New York Times bestselling author Wes Moore told the group to remain mindful of how short term decisions often dictate long term consequences.

"So instead of going through a process of looking at fiscally difficult times and saying that well this program or this initiative just has to be cut we have to think about ok but that's fine. But think about what will be the consequences 5, 10 15 years from now. Not just in terms of our competitiveness but also the moral and the ethical responsibility that we have in supporting our nation's and communities kids."

Tom Pittman, president of the Community Foundation of North West Mississippi says he believes teaching financial literacy to high school students could help provide a clearer path to their future.

"One young man told me he had two buddies he wished had gone through that because they could have learned how they could have gone to college. But they didn't think they could have gone to college so they signed up for the military. If they'd been able to go to college we know that their lifetime earnings would be significantly more. We need to create those kind of opportunities and inform kids and set expectations to achieve."

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor and Statistics full-time workers under the age of 25 with a bachelors earn roughly 65% more per week than high school graduates. Lawayne Childrey, MPB News.

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