New Accountability System
Summer Board Retreat
2009 Star Teachers
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What a summer it has been! Many events affecting us as educators have been in the spotlight. Thankfully, the budget will not keep school from starting on time. I know this school year may prove more difficult for some of us due to budget issues, but I know from working with talented and dedicated people for twenty-two years that the job will get done, and done well. I attended a seminar once with educators from all over the country. When the presenter found out that several of us were from Mississippi, she commented that Mississippi teachers could take $100.00 and make it do what some systems could not do with $1,000.00. I later thought about how true her words were. I have known teachers and principals who seemed to work miracles with little or nothing. I hope you and your fellow MPE members will remember to use all the valuable, free resources available through the MPE website.

Well, I was so excited to think that Judy would lead the Mississippi State Department of Education, only to be surprised by the last minute decision. I must admit, one of the reasons for my excitement was that, as MPE director, Judy would bring positive attention and recognition to MPE. I know that Judy does a great job and exudes professionalism in whatever venture she is involved. I am proud to have her back with us full time. I have always known what a great job Judy and the rest of the team at the office do, but this position has really shown me just how much everyone does and how competent they all are. We are truly lucky to have these highly qualified people taking care of business for us. I hope we will always remember to let them know how much we appreciate them.

The summer retreat at Percy Quin State Park was exceptional. Everything was well-organized and pertinent to our organization. I enjoyed interacting with the board members and their families, and Judy and her staff. I was pleased that so many educators and elected officials from the area could attend the reception. Hot does not even begin to describe the weather, but we had great meetings and accomplished what we set out to accomplish.

I wish you a great and productive school year. Please remember that we want 10,000 members in 2010. Call the office if you need any materials for your school and teachers. Talk to those veteran teachers, mentor those new teachers, include those bus drivers and support staff and make MPE an integral part of your school year.
MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
JUDY RHODES

I am so proud to continue to be a part of this great organization, the Mississippi Professional Educators. We continue to be the fastest growing professional educator association in the state. With your help, I expect our membership to top 9,000 by December or early January. In four short years we have grown by 35% to over 8,500 members today.

Please note our part-time recruiters (MPE Area Directors) now cover most of the state. I encourage you to contact them for visits to your schools and to call on them for assistance. Please refer to page 15 in this issue for contact information for your Area Director. Please also note our Recruitment Incentive Policy where you can earn a free membership for the next membership year, and earn a little spending money, based on the number recruited.

We are beginning to have a significant impact on education policy issues, as evidenced in this past legislative session. I believe you had a major impact in acquiring full funding for the basic education programs including MAEP, gifted, special education, vocational and National Board Certification. I plan to make sure we bring into focus issues important to you that need to be addressed both by the MS Board of Education and the state legislature. Please watch your weekly emails this Fall as we will keep you up-to-date on issues such as GED and dropout policies and their impact on the accountability system. The State Department has advised us that this year will be an opportunity to insure fairness and improvement in the new system, and has shown a willingness to address issues as they are identified. So I need your help in identifying policies and laws that impede your potential in providing a quality education to students.

I sincerely hope that each of you have a great year as you impact the learning of our next generation.

Judy Rhodes
To contact Judy Rhodes, please email her at judy@mpe.org

Visit our website at www.mpe.org

• UPDATE your membership profile
• JOIN or RENEW your membership
• Receive current BENEFITS INFORMATION
• Access our EDUCATIONAL & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES
In the famous words of the 1970’s television show Welcome Back Kotter - “Welcome Back” to a brand new school year. This year could prove to be the most important academic year in our history. With the country having been in an economic downturn for more than a year, the class of 2010 will face a more difficult challenge when entering the workforce on a global stage.

This generation of students will face stiff competition for career and college opportunities when they graduate. Now, more than ever, it is essential that the education we provide them today prepares them to meet the challenges of tomorrow. We have heard time and time again, that the most important tool in ensuring our boys and girls’ success in the classroom is having a good quality teacher. This could not be more true at this point and time in Mississippi.

The Mississippi Board of Education has taken the steps necessary in approving our curriculum offering so that it will challenge our students to reach their true potential and to keep pace with the national standards. To measure how well students, schools and districts are performing, the Board approved a new accountability rating model that will debut later in the fall. The Mississippi Legislature passed the Children First Act of 2009 (CFA) last year and with it comes greater accountability from our communities. The goal for everyone is to ensure that every child is growing, learning and graduating.

The Mississippi Department of Education stands ready to provide schools and teachers with the support of professional development, technical assistance and programs needed to enhance student achievement. Expectations continue to rise for all of our students. Our children are as bright as any children from around the country. I hope this year will be the most invigorating, challenging and rewarding year of your teaching career and that your students will exceed all of your expectations!

I commend you for the time, effort and commitment that you bring to the classroom each and every day to ensure that our boys and girls are prepared to lead the next generation. As a teacher, you have the confidence and full trust of everyone to lead and guide our students to achieve academic greatness. For that, we are all thankful. Welcome back!
Carol Rigby was recognized by Delta Kappa Gamma with its 2009 Achievement Award during its 2009 Convention in Meridian this past March. Delta Kappa Gamma recognizes two outstanding members each year with the Achievement Award which recognizes members’ work and dedication to the honorary society for women educators. A member of MPE since 1992, Carol is beginning her eighteenth year as Headmaster of Copiah Educational Foundation, Inc.

MPE Member Finalist for National Teachers Hall of Fame

Dr. Mary “Doc” Sennett was named a 2009 Finalist for the National Teachers Hall of Fame this past Spring. She was one of only 10 teachers in the nation to receive this honor. The mission of the National Teachers Hall of Fame is to recognize and honor exceptional career teachers, encourage excellence in teaching, and preserve the rich heritage of the teaching profession in the United States. Doc teaches chemistry at Northwest Rankin High School and has been a member of MPE since 2003. Congratulations, Doc!

LeAnn Moore Recognized as Teacher of Year

LeAnn Moore was recognized as East Jasper School District’s 2009 Teacher of the Year. We inadvertently left LeAnn off of the list of MPE members honored as their respective district’s 2009 Teacher of the Year in our Spring/Summer 2009 MPE Journal due to her being listed as Bonnie Moore by the MS Department of Education. Congratulations, LeAnn!
NEW ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

In August of 2005, former state superintendent Dr. Hank Bounds received a call from then-U.S. Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings informing him that Mississippi’s curriculum was not going to be approved by the U.S. Department of Education because expectations were far too low. This began the process of increasing expectations by increasing the rigor of our curriculum in Mississippi.

Once a new curriculum was in place, it became necessary to develop a new assessment system that reflected the new standards and the increased rigor of the curriculum. The Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) and a special accountability task force worked together to develop a rating system that appropriately reflects the goals set forth by the State Board of Education. These two groups focused on an accountability system with performance designations for both schools and districts, an accountability system that moves the State of Mississippi toward national average performance and an accountability system that includes an achievement component, a growth component, and a graduation or High School Completion Index (HSCI) component.

One very important concept of the new system is that a correlation to the national average can be drawn so that communities will know if their schools are performing at, above or below the national average. The new rating system will allow a comparison of student achievement from state to state and represents a major step forward for our state and will help us achieve our goal of reaching the national average on the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) by 2013.

The new system will be phased-in over a four-year period. During the first year, schools with a Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) between 200 and 300 will be designated as the highest performing. Each year the cut score will be raised until the fourth year, when schools with a QDI between 240 and 300 will be designated as highest performing. The eventual QDI cut score of approximately 240 reflects the necessary performance for Mississippi schools to be comparable to high performing schools nationally.

The new system is designed to give credit for moving students from minimal to basic, from basic to proficient and from proficient to advanced. This system utilizes a Quality of Distribution Index (QDI) that is derived by multiplying the percentage of students who score in the basic range by one, the percentage of students who score in the proficient range by two and the percentage of students who score in the advanced range by three and then adding those together. No credit is given for students scoring in the minimal range. By using this clear-cut, easy-to-understand method, anyone can determine the QDI once they know the percentage of students scoring in each category. You don’t have to be a statistician to calculate the QDI, no more z-scores.

The QDI represents achievement only. After a school receives their QDI, then we look at whether they have made inadequate academic gains, appropriate academic gains or outstanding academic gains. Growth is a reasonable expectation for improved student academic achievement based on annual assessment data. Growth at all levels of achievement is incorporated in the new accountability system.

Once achievement and growth have been determined, then we must address the issue of graduation rates or high school completion rates. Schools and districts can only achieve the highest ratings if they have high achievement, demonstrate growth over the previous year and do a good job of graduating students. Based on these factors, schools will receive one of seven designations, from lowest to highest: Failing, At-Risk of Failing, Academic Watch, Low Performing, Satisfactory, High Performing and Star School. Schools falling (continued pg. 11)
EVERYTHING I KNOW ABOUT DISCIPLINE I LEARNED ON A SCHOOL BUS

Benny J. Hornsby is a MPE board member who teaches Social Studies at Pearl River Community College as well as Classroom Management occasionally at William Carey University. Before moving to the community college classroom, he taught English and social studies at Lumberton and Sumrall schools for ten years.

Early in my teaching career, I also became a school bus driver, and I soon found that there was a synergistic relationship between teaching and bus driving, particularly regarding issues of order and discipline. What I learned in one arena had application in the other. I also found that the school bus was an excellent “laboratory” for visualizing the classroom management theories that I had learned in teacher preparation classes. I never had any real problems in either the bus or the classroom, except with the “not quites”: not quite so disruptive I couldn’t drive or teach, and not quite so bad major disciplinary action was necessary.

While I doubt that Lee Cantor, William Glasser, or Jacob S. Kounin ever drove a school bus, I found that three of their major ideas had direct application to that unique environment. For example, I found myself intuitively practicing what Cantor calls “Assertive Discipline.” An assertive driver (or teacher) is one who clearly and firmly communicates needs and requirements to passengers (or students), follows up with appropriate actions, and responds in ways that maximize compliance. Assertive Discipline usually begins with eye contact, but here Cantor offers a word of caution. Eye contact may be used for oral instructions and for praising students; however, it should be used sparingly to discipline those who are behaviorally different.

I also made use of the Glasser model, which is primarily known as “Reality Therapy.” He believes that students are rational beings and that they can control their behavior if they wish. However, they must often be guided to become responsible individuals able to satisfy their worldly needs. On a school bus, it is the driver’s job to provide guidance so that students can make good choices. Rules are essential to Glasser, and they must be enforced. A bus driver, for example, could post the rules for his or her bus: “No eating, Stay in your seat,” etc. Reasonable consequences should always follow misconduct, and no excuse should be accepted for poor behavior.

The principles of the Kounin model, which stresses the “ripple effect,” also found expression on my bus. He found that when teachers correct misbehavior in one student, it often influences the behavior of nearby students. According to this theory, one should clearly identify the misbehaving student, point out what the student is doing wrong, and what the student should be doing instead. Rules are essential to Glasser, and they must be enforced. A bus driver, for example, could post the rules for his or her bus: “No eating, Stay in your seat,” etc. Reasonable consequences should always follow misconduct, and no excuse should be accepted for poor behavior.

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Over this past summer, the state Department of Education has been conducting workshops for “Alternate Route” teachers here on our community college campus, and I stopped to listen to the presentations a few times on the way to class. I paid particular attention to their sessions on Classroom Management and Discipline. I couldn’t help but think what a good thing it would be if these fledging teachers had the opportunity to drive a school bus!
The MPE Board of Directors has set a recruiting goal of “10,000 members by 2010.” Having a membership of 10,000 will ensure that policy makers and legislators seek our input in the education policy making process. We need your assistance in achieving this membership goal. Your board has approved the following recruiting scale as an incentive for our reaching “10,000 members by 2010”:

Our recruitment incentives provide a great way for members to earn a free membership, as well as a little extra money:

**RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES**

RECRUIT 5 NEW MEMBERS - RECEIVE A FREE YEAR’S MEMBERSHIP
*RECRUIT 6-9 NEW MEMBERS - FREE YEAR’S MEMBERSHIP + RECEIVE $10 FOR EACH
*RECRUIT 10-14 NEW MEMBERS - FREE YEAR’S MEMBERSHIP + RECEIVE $15 FOR EACH
*RECRUIT 15 AND OVER NEW MEMBERS - FREE YEAR’S MEMBERSHIP + RECEIVE $20 FOR EACH

You will receive $5 per student member recruited.

Recruitment bonus checks will be awarded at the end of each quarter, with the first quarter beginning July 1 and ending September 30. Credit will be given for each new member who has joined or re-joined** between July 1, 2009 and June 30, 2010. Free memberships will be credited towards next year’s membership.

* credit will be given for each additional member after 5
** member must have previously been made inactive for a period of three months

A MOMENT IN TIME

MPE is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. We’ve seen many changes throughout the years as we’ve watched our members and their families grow. When current MPE Board Member Philene Allen served as President in 2000, she invited the children and grandchildren of MPE members in her area to be pictured with her for the cover of our MPE Journal. The young lady seated to Philene’s right is Angela Silas Towers. An education major at Delta State at the time, Angela now serves on our MPE Board of Directors representing District 3.
SUMMER BOARD RETREAT

MPE Board Hosts Annual Planning Retreat

Your MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 17-19 at Percy Quin State Park just south of McComb. The board hosted a reception and dinner for local educators and legislators Wednesday evening. Representative Becky Currie; Representative Bobby Moak; Dr. Oliver Young, President of Southwest Mississippi Community College; Leah Barrett, Superintendent of the Brookhaven School District; Debbie Hopf, Superintendent of the Amite County School District; and Darryl Brock and James Coney of North Pike High School enjoyed visiting with MPE board members. Former MPE President Steve Bishop and his wife Melanie also attended.

Review and consideration of our new Attorney Fees Reimbursement Policy, as well as the Amended and Restated Bylaws, were the focus of retreat discussions on Thursday. Upon advice of our attorney and assuming adoption at the Special Meeting of members on September 26, the proposed Amended and Restated Bylaws will supersede and replace the current bylaws known as the Constitution, and the Constitution will have no further effect.

Your Board of Directors continues to give much of their time and efforts in advancing MPE. We certainly appreciate their leadership and service.

New Accountability System
(continued from page 8)

on the upper end of Satisfactory and the lower end of High Performing will be performing at the national average. Schools falling on the upper end of High Performing and all Star Schools will be equal in quality to any school in the country.

With any new system there are always questions that arise. The Commission on School Accreditation (CSA) realized that this new system would need to be monitored during the first year to determine if changes in the system should be addressed. The CSA will address issues in the new system during the 2009-2010 school year. There have been a number of questions concerning the High School Completer Index (HSCI). This is a complicated subject that has generated much debate. In this process, it must be remembered that the bottom line is to increase graduation rates in our state. The graduation rate for the state accountability model is determined by the number of students that receive a regular diploma five years after entering the 9th grade. Graduation rates do not take into account any certification from the state except a regular diploma. For this reason, values in the HSCI differ for regular diploma and other certifications. There are questions about values of each area and these will be addressed during the coming school year.

If you have any additional questions please see the information located on the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) web page at http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/. Information about the new accountability system can be found at the MDE site under the heading of Student Performance and the Office of Accreditation.
Recently, President Barack Obama proposed a $12 billion spending plan for community colleges across the nation. If passed by Congress, the initiative would have several important components. First, it would create a Community College Challenge Fund which would provide competitive grants to community colleges and states to build partnerships, expand course offerings, improve remedial and adult education, and provide support services. Next, a College Access and Completion Fund would support efforts to increase college graduation rates and close achievement gaps at community colleges. Also included are funds for community college facilities which would expand the colleges’ ability to meet employer and student needs. Finally, a New Online Skills Laboratory would support grants to create new open-access online courses. While this is only a proposal, it is encouraging to see increased national recognition of the importance of community colleges throughout the nation.

Governor Haley Barbour has shown a tremendous commitment to Mississippi community colleges. He has announced a plan to set aside $9.8 million of his discretionary money from the federal stimulus package for each of the next three fiscal years to go towards the community colleges’ budget. These funds will be crucial in helping our community colleges have stable funding over the next couple of years.

It is gratifying to see that, on both national and state levels, our leaders are proving that they recognize the phenomenal contributions our community colleges are making to our citizens.

One important, but often over-looked, contribution is to the many Mississipians who were not able to receive their high school diploma. During FY 09, our community colleges awarded 5,395 GEDs. The folks who earned these degrees were able to advance their education and better their lives.

During June, our Adult Education office sponsored the annual Adult Basic Education Staff Development Regional Conferences in Oxford and Natchez. More than 600 people attended these two conferences. All of the participants are on the front-line of improving our state and are dedicated folks who might not normally receive the recognition they deserve for the important work they do. It was an honor to spend some time with them.

At these conferences, awards were given to students and teachers of the year in the adult education field. In the northern region of the state, Brystal Sandlin from the Northeast Community College Adult Basic Education Program was awarded student of the year, and Pricilla Burns from the Grenada Schools was awarded instructor of the year. In the southern region of the state, Richard Gray from the Hinds Community College Adult Basic Education Program was awarded student of the year, and Gloria Ozier from the Rankin Schools was named instructor of the year. Congratulations to these winners!

In previous articles, I have mentioned enrollment increases at the community colleges. Not only are our traditional classroom enrollment figures increasing, but also those in the Mississippi Virtual Community College (MSVCC). For the summer 2009 term, enrollment at the online community college was up 22.4% compared to the summer 2008 term. This is in addition to a 17% increase from fall 2007 to fall 2008 and a 27% increase from spring 2008 to spring 2009. The MSVCC is another convenient way for students to take classes, and obviously a lot of people are discovering that.

As the new school year begins, I hope that everyone has the best year ever!
Fall is such an exciting time of year. There is a crispness in the air and a welcome break from the sweltering Mississippi heat. There is also a sense of anticipation and excitement surrounding the start of the new school year – a new class of students, new spiral notebooks, sharp new #2 pencils, new room decorations, and a new opportunity to help students reach their potential.

I want to thank each and every one of you for seizing that opportunity. Mississippi’s future rests on the shoulders of our educators and the commitment you make to the students in this state. I also appreciate the tireless work of the Mississippi Professional Educators for supporting Mississippi’s teachers and administrators. Our shared future is brighter because of you.

Teachers fill the most critical needs in the state, serving as surrogate parents and counselors even while fulfilling their primary role as educators. It is a hard job that is often underappreciated and undervalued. Yet, the work of teachers is directly linked to the economic well-being of our state.

Teachers bear the responsibility (and opportunity!) of shaping this nation’s future workforce – the doctors who will care for us as we age, the teachers who will educate our grandchildren, and the entrepreneurs who will ensure America remains competitive throughout the 21st century.

I have recently accepted a new role as the Commissioner of Higher Education. In this role, I will continue to work to promote the efforts of Mississippi’s educators. After all, it is the job of our universities to provide new teachers and administrators with the skills and tools they need to be successful. Our universities also conduct research to inform the strategies we employ in the classroom.

It is critical that all levels of education, from pre-kindergarten to post-graduate, work together to meet the needs of the state. I hope that my tenure as Commissioner will serve to bridge the gap between secondary and post-secondary education in Mississippi.

As you take advantage of your new class of opportunities this fall, I too, will seize new opportunities to improve the lives of students in Mississippi. I look forward to continuing a long and fruitful partnership with you.

MPE is proud to partner with JBHM Education Group in the delivery of one day professional development sessions designed to support school personnel’s growth for the benefit of themselves and their students. Training topics include Classroom Management, Level of Rigor, Differentiated Instruction and more! CEUs are provided. Visit www.mpe.org for more info!
2009 STAR TEACHERS

MPE is proud to congratulate and honor the following members who were recognized in April by the Mississippi Economic Council as STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition) Teachers. 49 of the 260 (19%) teachers recognized this year are MPE members, including MPE District 5 Board Member Lia Landrum!

Millie Arender, Vancleave High School
Jennifer Bochicchio, West Marion High School
Steven A. Browning, Moss Point High School
Jimmy R. Caradine, Vardaman High School
Lucretia A. Carpenter, Petal High School
Claudia R. Carter, MS School for Math & Science
Robin M. Case, Loyd Star High School
Carey R. Crain, Marshall Academy
Julie B. Cunningham, Louisville High School
John Draper, Ackerman High School
Rona R. Eckles, Hernando High School
Ginger P. Fowler, West Point High School
Kelley M. Godwin, NE Lauderdale High School
Lynn Haynes, Ripley High School
Lisa F. Herndon, Amory High School
Larry J. Hess, Wayne Academy
Laura L. Howard, South Pontotoc High School
Patsy S. Hughes, Poplarville High School
Jody G. Jarjoura, Independence High School
Makisha T. Keyes, Bay Springs High School
Faye D. Kinard, West Lauderdale High School
Lia Landrum, South Jones High School
Ann Lathrop, Bay High School
Sandra T. Lewis, Franklin High School
Brenda S. Lott, Seminary High School

Robert Magee, East Central High School
Brenda S. Mason, Eupora High School
Jennifer F. Mathis, George County High School
Kathy McKone, Bogue Chitto High School
Marsha Miller, Copiah Academy
Cindy G. Morris, Pisgah High School
Susan E. Neal, Newton High School
Angie K. Newlin, Bruce High School
D’Aunn Odom, Quitman High School
Linda S. Parrott, Ocean Springs High School
Holli A. Pepper, West Lincoln High School
Sarah H. Pylant, Purvis High School
Chuck Rhoads, Puckett High School
David C. Rogers, Ethel High School
Mary Beth Rounsavill, Richton High School
Krista K. Russell, Brookhaven High School
Shonna H. Ryals, Kosciusko High School
Annette C. Sellers, Caledonia High School
Ann P. Shoemake, Oak Grove High School
Mason S. Smith, Lumberton High School
Janie B. Thrasher, Belmont High School
Ruby Wallace, Yazoo City High School
Margie Watkins, Northeast Jones High School
James B. Wood, Weir High School
MPE AREA DIRECTORS

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www.mpe.org  PAGE 15
Why MPE?

The premier package of benefits for the least amount of money!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009-2010 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional with liability insurance</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>$408* - 444*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couples with liability insurance</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>-NA-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-certified or part-time with insurance</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$204* - $216.50*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student Teacher with insurance</td>
<td>$14</td>
<td>$10* - $21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Educator without insurance</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$10* - $60*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Professional liability protection of $2 million with $3 million maximum (other organizations provide only $1 million with $3 million maximum)

Up to $10,000 for legal assistance related to employment or professional matters

$10,000 in accidental death & dismemberment coverage (one organization offers as an optional benefit at an additional cost and one provides AD&D benefits to new members for one year)

$2,500 assault related property damage (5x the coverage of another organization)

Only organization to provide identity theft coverage with membership

Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarships awarded annually

Unlimited professional advice available 24 hours per day/7 days per week (included with membership)

Every dollar of your dues stays in Mississippi for your benefit! MPE does not utilize dues to support political candidates.