Farewell to Jo Anne Abernathy

MPE Board Retreat Highlights

New! Regional Training Opportunities

Special Back to School Edition!

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL YEAR
IMPLEMENTING COMMON CORE

Farewell to Jo Anne Abernathy
MPE Board Retreat Highlights
New! Regional Training Opportunities
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districts

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Office Staff

Mississippi Professional Educators

Playing as a Team to Implement Common Core

Tips for a Successful Year

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The Board of Directors met in Natchez for their annual planning retreat in June.

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Tips for a Successful Year

Effective tips on Classroom Management, Code of Ethics, Professional Files and Parent Relationships

MPE Journal

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Dr. Benny Hornsby

MAKE EVERY DAY COUNT!

As we begin a new school year, we all become more time conscious. I spent 18 of my 36 years in the Navy at sea, and in my spare time I worked on clocks. It was often difficult because the rocking of the ship wrecked havoc on the pendulums, but I enjoyed it because I realized how crucial “time” was and, as a “clockmaker,” I had the fantasy of being able to control it more than most mortals. I could stop it, I could speed it up; I could slow it down, shoot, I could even move it backwards! All this was an illusion, of course, because no one can actually affect the inextricable passage of time.

“Time” was extremely important in the Navy, and you often heard it referred to in our speech in the form of clichés. For example, the commanding officer might be overheard to say “Time and tide wait for no man,” and the sailors down in the boiler room on those 100 degree days in the South China Sea probably muttered under their breath that “time really flies when you are having fun.”

The famous French writer, Voltaire, was small in stature and giant in intellect. In one of his novels, The Mystery of Fate, his protagonist, Zadig, is asked “What of all the things in the world, is the longest and the shortest, the swiftest and the slowest, the most divisible and the most extended, the most neglected, and the most regretted, without which nothing can be done, which devours all that is little, and enlivens all that is great?”

His answer, of course, is “time,” and in the longest life, time is already short. It seems to me that time, our most precious asset, is roughly divided into three parts: yesterday, tomorrow, and today. I believe that much of the anxiety in the world is caused by either a misspent past, a hostile future, or a troubled present, and two of these you really don't have to worry about. Let’s consider these two days more closely. For example, you don't have to worry about yesterday. Yesterday is in the past and we must learn to leave it there. Nor do you have to worry about tomorrow. We should plan for the future, of course, but live in the present. That only leaves today to worry about and here are six simple ways to take control of it:

1. DIVIDE AND CONQUER. Divide your life into days and conquer on a daily basis.
2. ATTACK THE DAY BEFORE IT ATTACKS YOU. Get up and start facing your problems.
3. SCHEDULE YOUR WORK. Set priorities and do the more difficult jobs first while you are the freshest. Plan the work and work the plan.
4. COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS, NOT YOUR TROUBLES. You are what you think you are.
5. RECOGNIZE THAT SOME DAYS WILL BE BETTER THAN OTHERS. You can handle a bad day because you know that it will soon be behind you and tomorrow marks a new beginning.
6. FINALLY, BEGIN TODAY! We are blessed to be employed in such a meaningful profession. Let’s don't waste a moment of it!

Kelly Riley

As I write this article on July 31st, I cannot believe the summer is gone! As a parent, I'm thankful that I ordered the pre-packaged school supplies last spring for my children so that I don't have to fight the crowded aisles at the stores. As your MPE Executive Director, I’m excited as to the opportunities that our members will have to once again positively impact their students’ lives.

I am happy to tell you that our MPE office will be moving to a new location this fall. We are busying at the seams in our current office and are running out of space. The neighborhood surrounding our current location has also declined in recent years. We will be moving to 222 N. President, which is 2 blocks south of the capital and will allow us to walk back and forth to the capital during legislative sessions. The new space provides us ample room to grow and to meet our members' needs.

MPE is proud to offer three new benefits to our members:

- **1st Year Professional Membership**: This new membership category is available to MPE student members renewing as a professional and applies to their first year dues only. The new rate for this category is $90. MPE’s Board of Directors elected to provide this new category as a means of encouraging our student members to remain active with our organization as they begin their professional careers.

- **Classroom Grants**: Of those members who participated in our online membership survey last fall, the greatest percentage (39%) responded that they would be interested in our offering classroom grants as a new benefit. Responsive to you, our members, we have developed a classroom grant program. We will award up to sixteen (16) $500 grants that will be awarded to teachers or instructors to try out a new idea or buy the “extras” for an already great lesson plan or project. Applications are due August 31st, with grants to be awarded by October 1st. We will spotlight recipients in a future issue of the MPE Journal.

- **Regional Trainings**: As he shared in our Spring 2012 MPE Journal, MPE President Dr. Benny Hornsby has a goal of offering one in-service training with CEU credit in each of our eight MPE districts this year. Please see page 22 for dates and locations of these trainings that will increase the understanding of teachers for CCSS and provide strategies for planning and delivering best practice instruction to improve student achievement on MCT2 and/or SATP while using learning activities aligned to CCSS. MPE is offering these trainings free-of-charge to the first 50 members who register for each site. Participants will receive CEU credits if they meet attendance criteria, as well as a resource guide for the subject and grade level that they teach.

As we begin a new school year, I want to encourage you and your co-workers to share your stories of success in your school. The picture is painted too often that education is failing. We certainly have room for improvement, but we must not forget to tell our own story and to celebrate our students’ successes. Our schools, community colleges and universities have done a remarkable job during these last few years of tight economic times. For our part, MPE will continue to spotlight Educators of Excellence. We will continue to spotlight the accomplishments of our members in our weekly emails and our MPE Journal. I hope your schools will utilize their websites, press releases and other communications, to work with the media in your communities to share the good news of education and its impact on our state. Have a great year!
Playing as a Team to Implement Common Core

With approximately 19 classroom teachers at our Kindergarten planning meeting each week, we took collaboration to a whole new level. We were all a bit overwhelmed this past school year at the idea of implementing the Common Core State Standards for the first time so we decided to pool our intellectual resources and years of experience to make our time together more productive. The concept of group planning is not entirely new to our school; however, this year we shared responsibilities and felt more ownership in creating learning experiences that would ultimately impact every student in our grade.

Each meeting began with a “roll call” to ensure that all were present. With very little time it was essential to begin promptly each week. Each teacher had her own “job” and was responsible for collecting resources and sharing her ideas with the group. For example, some teachers created vocabulary flip charts for the Promethean board. Others worked to provide us with independent language arts center activities. It was somewhat difficult to come up with 19 different jobs and to ensure that each task carried the same weight but we took each person’s strengths into account and developed a working formula. We gave each teacher at least five minutes of uninterrupted time to share her idea with the group.

Our grade chair called each meeting to order, and we allowed each team member to share the lessons, songs, poems, crafts, hands-on activities, etc. that combined to create our weekly plans. It was really amazing how we all came together to prepare quality instruction for our students. We quickly found that we did not miss the days of creating lesson plans on our own. Some, including myself, were hesitant to join the group in years past because of the overwhelming nature of a group of 19 teachers being in one room together trying to agree; although, I must admit that I was a much stronger teacher this year as a result of the contributions of my colleagues who have so many wonderful gifts and talents. As a side note, let me mention that Pinterest played an integral part in our success too. However, because our searches sometimes led us to the same teaching blogs, on one occasion three different people shared the same leprechaun craft!

I met a fellow teacher this summer while vacationing in Gulf Shores, AL. She and I chatted about our children who are roughly the same age. During our conversation she asked me a question about lesson planning, and I told her about the weekly meetings at my school. She was amazed! It was then that I realized the uniqueness of this type of collaboration. I often marvel at the size of our school—last year we had approximately 950 Kindergarten and First Grade students on our campus. When I began teaching at Oak Grove Primary 11 years ago, there were only 12 sections of each grade. Because of continuous growth in our community there will be 23 Kindergarten classes on our campus this year! Not only are the teachers in our grade level talented and creative, but the other members of the Oak Grove Primary team are outstanding as well. We also have an amazing leadership team, phenomenal teaching assistants, and exceptional support staff. All of these things combined truly make Oak Grove Primary a great place to work.

They say “two heads are better than one,” that is definitely the case at Oak Grove Primary School in Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

Deedre’ Coll, MPE Board of Directors

Your MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 20-22 in Natchez. We hosted a reception for local educational leaders on Wednesday evening. Dr. Steve Bishop, President of Southwest Mississippi Community College, as well as Ray Corlock, Superintendent of the Franklin County School District; Dr. Grody Fleming, former superintendent of the Franklin County School District; and Allison Jowers, Assistant Principal of Natchez High School, enjoyed visiting with MPE board members and their guests. Each of these educators is also a MPE member!

Thursday’s planning meeting included reviewing proposals for regional in-service training sessions throughout the state, as well as other MPE activities and operations for the upcoming year. The Board held its quarterly meeting on Friday. Your Board of Directors continues to give much of their time and efforts toward advancing MPE. We certainly appreciate their leadership and service.

2012 Board Planning Retreat
EDUCATOR OF EXCELLENCE, DEVIN WALSH

A resident of Purvis, Devin Walsh has been recognized as an Educator of Excellence for her work at Oak Grove Primary School where she has been teaching for 11 years. Ms. Walsh is a K-1 looping teacher and has been a member of MPE since 2002. She is a member of Delta Kappa Gamma and the Mississippi Reading Association. Ms. Walsh was nominated by Deedre’ Coll and three other colleagues, Tanya Byrd, Laurin Kay, and Jeri Reese, who agree that she is a selfless team leader with a true passion for teaching. According to Laurin, Devin is always looking to find “new and exciting ways to teach,” and “sets high standards and expectations.” Tanya states that “Devin Walsh is a superior teacher” who runs an efficient classroom and always puts forth “extra effort to be fully prepared every day.” Tanya also credits Devin as the reason she decided to pursue her own teaching career in education, noting that while working as Devin’s teaching assistant, “she set an excellent example of patience, love, and kindness for me every day.” Devin taught me how to love teaching, and I am now in my eleventh year of teaching.” Another MPE member, Kathy McKone, was also recently awarded a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Kathy teaches science classes, including Chemistry and Biomedical Research, at Enterprise Attendance Center and has been a member of MPE since 2007. She has her Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in science education from the University of Southern Mississippi. Kathy earned her National Board Certification in adolescence and young adulthood science and is a certified secondary science teacher.

PRESIDENTIAL AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE TEACHING AWARDED

MPE Member Jennifer Wilson was recently awarded a Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching. Jennifer has been teaching at Northwest Rankin High School for 15 years and has been a member of MPE since 1993. She teaches pre-calculus, AP calculus and geometry. She has also been chosen as a STAR teacher for four years. In a news release, Rankin County School District’s superintendent, Dr. Lynn Weathersby, said that Jennifer “is an excellent teacher and it is a privilege to have her as an educator in our district. She is a committed educator whose first priority is seeing her students excel. She demands and expects the best from her students and she gets it.”

An EF5 tornado tore through our town on April 27, 2011. It robbed us of businesses, the majority of our town’s buildings, and 16 precious lives. We were down, beaten, and bruised, but we were not defeated. We know we will never be able to get back what was taken in those ten terrifying seconds, but we are doing our best to rebuild things even better than they were for our future generations. We have learned what makes a town special is not its buildings. Our buildings are gone. Our citizens are what makes our town special!”

Jill Horne is a gifted education teacher at Smithville Elementary and has been a member of MPE since 2010.

RETIREE ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Mrs. Annie Pearl Matthews retired this past spring after 47 years of teaching. She retired as a history teacher from Louisville High School and has been a member of MPE since 1989. Congratulations, Mrs. Matthews!

Ms. Linda Powell retired from Sale Elementary in the Columbus School District. She has been teaching for 40 years and has been a member of MPE since 1982. She has also served MPE as a building representative. Congratulations, Ms. Powell!

We want to thank both of these ladies for their dedication to education, and we wish them all the best in their retirement years!
The start of a new school year is full of new opportunities to positively impact your students’ lives. Your students will look to you not only for knowledge, but for guidance and support, as you journey together through this year. As educators, we encourage respect for our profession through the practice of the highest standards of personal and professional conduct. While the following suggestions are certainly not all inclusive, MPE offers them to make your year as successful as possible.

Classroom Management

You should have defined your expectations for students’ academic performance and behavior during the first few days of class. Make sure your expectations are attainable and reasonable. The best teachers practice what they preach.

• Be clear and firm: Make sure everyone understands the classroom rules and consequences of breaking them. Do not ignore infractions, especially during the first few weeks of school.

• Be understanding: Make work assignments relevant to your students, and balance challenging assignments with fun activities that are also academically stimulating. Students need exercise, breaks and social stimulation, so plan activities accordingly.

• Be positive: School should be an engaging and positive place for students. Tell your students what they need to do to succeed in your classroom, and do your part to ensure their success. Remember to lead by example.

• Be enthusiastic: Enthusiasm is contagious! If you’re not excited about your lesson plans or the process of learning, then your students won’t be either.

• Be encouraging: Nurture your students’ self-confidence and pride in their schoolwork by routinely rewarding them for excellent work, attendance and behavior. Try to recognize every student over the course of the year.

Classroom Discipline

Ask yourself the question “how can I get my students to respect themselves, their peers and me?” If respect, simplicity and clarity are at the heart of your discipline plan, you’ll have a much easier year. Here are five steps for effective discipline:

1. Study the discipline procedures for your school or district. Know the procedures for assigning detentions, sending students to the office and contacting parents.

2. Be clear about your expectations. Post a brief list of classroom rules – five or fewer – that are clear and concise. Make sure parents get a copy.

3. Consistency and fairness are key. Applying the rules with consistency will earn respect from your students and prevent bad habits from becoming the norm. Make sure punishments are in proportion to the offense.

4. Keep your cool when disciplining students. If you are upset, take a few minutes to collect yourself. Remind the student that he or she chose not to follow the rules and must accept the consequences of their choice. Once the incident is over, move on.

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Professional Files

An educator’s professional file serves several functions: a portfolio, a storage space for important documents, and a keepsake of fond memories. Use either a collapsible file or a small file box for your professional file, which should include:

• Evaluations: Keep copies of any documents you create or use during your evaluation process. Be sure to keep a copy of the evaluation itself. Remember, if an administrator asks you to sign an evaluation, your signature indicates only that you read the evaluation and not that you agree with it. If you are placed on an improvement plan to target specific areas of concern and help you achieve success, keep documentation of your completion of the plan.

• Contracts: Put a copy of every contract you sign into your file. It’s a good idea to include your certification papers and your college transcript.

• Positive Communications: Thank you notes can be lifesavers if you ever come under fire. It’s always impressive when an educator can produce a file packed with testimonials from satisfied parents and students. Plus, they’re nice to read when you are having a bad day.

• School Board Policies: Keeping your school board’s policies on hand will keep your memory fresh about your school’s dress code, evaluations, transfers, grievance procedures and more. Be sure to get a new version of the policy each year.

• Emergency Plan: Keep your school’s emergency plans and procedures readily available and be aware of the school evacuation plan, severe weather plan, and lockdown plans.

• Extraordinary Incidents: If something out of the ordinary happens (i.e., student injured, a parent-teacher conference doesn’t go well, etc...), jot down details while they’re still fresh in your mind, including names, locations, and time. Be sure to notify your supervisor and to complete any documentation required by your district. Be prepared by keeping concise, complete records.

Code of Ethics

The Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct applies to all persons licensed according to the rules established by the State Board of Education and protects the health, safety and general welfare of students and educators. Any educator or administrator license may be revoked or suspended for engaging in unethical conduct relating to an educator/student relationship (Standard 4). You may find a copy of the Mississippi Educator Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct at www.mpe.org.
Parents and educators are equally important in the educational success of students. Close communication with your students’ parents is key to your students’ achievement. When students see their parents and teachers working together to improve learning and student success, their attitudes and motivation improve.

- **Try to contact parents with positive notes** as soon as you can. That way, if a problem should develop, your first contact with the parent will not be negative.
- **Send a monthly newsletter, note or email** to your students’ parents. Include a calendar of goals and plans for each week and the topics to be studied. Be sure to keep your school website updated on a weekly basis so that parents have access to the most recent news regarding your classroom. If your district utilizes grade book software, send a weekly email notifying parents that the electronic grade book has been updated.
- **Regularly provide parents with samples of their child’s work.** Send graded papers, tests and major projects home on a regular basis to be initialed or signed by parents. Inform parents about their child’s successes, as well as areas where improvement is needed.
- **When faced with a discipline problem in the classroom, promptly notify parents and work together toward a solution.** Make your principal aware of students who are falling short of your expectations, as well as your efforts with students and parents.
- **Stay active in your school’s PTA/PTO.**
- **Be positive in all interactions with parents.** Document all contact with parents, including notes you make during parent-teacher conferences. Focus on solutions to problems their child may be having. If parents feel comfortable with you, they will be more receptive to your concerns should a problem arise.

**Parent Relationships**

Jo Anne Abernathy, co-founder of MPE, died on June 4. Miss Abernathy taught in the Jackson Public Schools for 39 years, where she was named “teacher of the Year” in 1985. She was a member for many years, and president for three years, of the Tau Chapter of Delta Kappa Gamma Educational Society. Mrs. Linda Anglin, MPE’s founder, provided the following regarding Miss Abernathy’s immeasurable contributions to MPE.

Mississippi Professional Educators lost one of its founders on June 4, 2012. Jo Anne Abernathy was the first “money manager,” bookkeeper, membership organizer, etc. who set up MPE’s first office on her dining room table in 1978. She opened up MPE’s bank account with three $20 checks from the first three paid members. Jo Anne continued the bookwork faithfully until MPE was able to hire a director and secretary several years later.

Jo Anne remained a loyal member as she taught first grade in Jackson. She won many awards during her 39-year career for her outstanding ability as a teacher.

As her close friend during those many years, I consider her friendship as one of my great blessings.

I often remind people that there would be no MPE without Jo Anne Abernathy and the work she did for the group. Her death was a great personal loss to me as well as MPE’s loss of one of its founders.

**ATTENTION STUDENT TEACHERS:**

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**DRANE RECEIVES AWARDS**

**Evans Recognized as Teacher of the Year**

**Evelyn Evans** was recognized in May, 2012 as Teacher of the Year for Oak Park Elementary in the Laurel School District. Evelyn teaches 5th Grade Reading and Social Studies. She has been teaching for 9 years. In the past, Evelyn received the East Jasper Teacher of the Year award and the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Teacher of the Year award. She has a one year School Leadership License; Advanced Graduate degree of Elementary Education from William Carey University; Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Southern Mississippi; and Associate degree from Jones County Junior College. Evelyn has been a member of MPE since 2003.

**Rayner-Sumrall Earns Doctorate**

**Dr. Marla Rayner-Sumrall** completed her doctoral work with graduation on April 27, 2012, from Jackson State University when she received a Doctorate of Philosophy in Educational Administration. Her dissertation was entitled “Teachers’ and Administrators’ Perceptions of the Preparedness and Effectiveness of Substitute Teachers in a Selected Mississippi School District in Mississippi.” Along with this degree, Dr. Rayner-Sumrall holds a Bachelor of Science Degree in Elementary Education from the University of Southern Mississippi (1991) and a Master of Education Degree in Special Education with an emphasis in Gifted Education from the University of Southern Mississippi (1994).

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RECRUITMENT INCENTIVES

MPE's recruitment incentives provide a great way for you to earn a free membership, as well as a little extra money. You earn a free year's membership for simply recruiting five new members and you earn money for each new member recruited after five. Encourage your professional co-workers and friends to join the premiere organization for professional educators in Mississippi.

- Five new members = one year's free membership
- 6-9 new members = one year's free membership + $10 per member*
- 10-14 members = one year's free membership + $15 per member*
- 15 or more new members = one year's free membership + $20 per member*

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 joins or re-joins** between July 1, 2012 and June 30, 2013. Free memberships will be credited towards the 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 or more

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You'll earn a free year's membership for simply recruiting five new members and you'll earn money for each new member recruited after five. Encourage your professional co-workers and friends to join the premiere organization for professional educators in Mississippi.

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To reach our public education goals in Mississippi, we must strive to ensure that all teachers and administrators have the necessary knowledge and skills to produce strong results. As educators, we must challenge ourselves to be better, to go the extra mile, and continue learning if we want our students to reach those expectations. That’s why the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) has worked with multiple constituency groups and national experts to develop teacher and principal evaluation systems.

Many of you already know about M-STAR, the Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric. MDE has spent the last eighteen months gathering input and feedback from more than two thousand teachers and administrators across the state with the ultimate goal for M-STAR focusing on improving teaching and learning. M-STAR contains 20 standards within five domains: Planning, Assessment, Instruction, Learning Environment and Professional Responsibility. Teachers will receive a rating for each standard, and ratings will be averaged for the domains. Overall scores will be based on student learning outcomes, professional growth, and observation of professional practice. Districts will provide the results of the evaluations to the MDE for the purpose of reporting to the United States Department of Education (USDE) and the public. Results will also be utilized for targeted professional development and other interventions.

M-STAR should help highlight a teacher’s strengths and areas of challenge, guide teachers as they reflect on their own practices, provide shared understanding regarding priorities, goals, and expectations, and finally, serve as a tool to help structure principal instructional leadership and feedback.

Training of evaluators and teachers will begin this fall, field tests in each district will take place in the 2013-14 school year, and full implementation starts the fall of 2014. Teacher evaluations were included in the requirements for the No Child Left Behind waiver request by the USDE, and we feel at least one step ahead as the evaluation system is already in place and moving forward. MDE is looking forward to the “pilot” results at the end of the upcoming school year and to refining our evaluations into what best serves our educators and students across Mississippi.

For principals, we are looking for leaders who help ensure that all their students reach ambitious performance targets. In other words, in the schools of effective principals, all students reach a high level of academic success. Within the principal evaluation system, principals will be measured by leadership behavior as well as outcomes. As you would expect, student learning is 50 percent of the outcomes portion of the evaluation, while the remainder of the evaluation is based upon meeting organizational goals and the results of a 360 degree evaluation of leadership behaviors completed by the teachers, supervisor, and the principal. The pilot implementation of the Mississippi Principal Evaluation System will begin this fall and will run the entire year. Refinement and training will take place over the summer of 2013, and full implementation will go into effect in the fall of 2013.

The goal that all educators in our state share is to give our students, Mississippi’s future, the best educational experience possible. We believe that the new teacher and principal evaluation systems will help make our educators, schools, and districts better, and we look forward to working with you to ensure that both systems are fair, equitable, and effective.

Mississippi community colleges have a well-deserved reputation as being among the best in the nation. In recent years, two major studies have validated that reputation. The National Center for Higher Education Management Systems made a study that ranked Mississippi second in the nation for public two-year institutions, relative to funding. Also, the Nelson A. Rockefeller Institute of Government ranked Mississippi as one of four states ahead of the national rates based on five objective measurements. Last year, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College was named one of the top ten community colleges in the country by the Aspen Institute of Government. Earlier this year, the Aspen Institute named Itawamba Community College, Meridian Community College, Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College, and Pearl River Community College among the top 120 in the country. These institutions are now eligible to compete for the $1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, which will be named in March. These are just a few examples of the national recognition our community colleges have received.

During the 2012 legislative session, Governor Phil Bryant appointed three new members to the Mississippi Community College Board. Mr. Lee Bush from Jackson fills an unexpired term to represent the Fourth Congressional District set to expire in 2014. Mr. John Pilgott from Picayune will represent the Fifth Congressional District, and Mrs. Cheryl Thurmond from Ripley will represent the First Congressional District. Both of their terms are set to expire in 2018. All three will do an outstanding job in the coming years of helping to better our community colleges.

The Mississippi State Personnel Board was recently authorized by the Legislature to establish the Excellence in Government Awards program to encourage the development of innovative systems of public administration. In June, Governor Bryant presented the inaugural Excellence in Local and District Government Award to Dr. Clyde Muse, president of Hinds Community College. Dr. Muse was selected based on his impact at both the college and the community college system. Specifically, Dr. Muse was recognized for his innovative approach to providing affordable and accessible education, including his public/private partnership with the Army National Guard; his local county/college partnership with Rankin County; and his public school/community college partnership with the Gateway to College National Network, which will be launched during the fall. Dr. Muse has served as president of the college since 1978 and is recognized nationally as a great leader among American community colleges. One of his lasting legacies will be the fact that he bet-tered all levels of education in the state. Congratulations to Dr. Muse on this outstanding achievement.

I hope that everyone has settled into the school routine. As you begin another year educating our elementary, middle school, high school, community college, and university students, I thank you for the job you do. You are preparing the future leaders of our state and nation and there are few jobs that are as important as yours. Good luck this year!
Educational institutions of all levels must first provide a safe environment in which all students may learn and flourish. The recent events at Penn State University remind us how devastating it is for both individuals and the institution when other priorities are placed above the safety and security of the students. As educators, we have a tremendous responsibility to protect all young people on our campuses and expose any situation that compromises their safety. The actions of only a few can have a ripple effect that is felt far beyond the campus boundaries.

Providing a safe and healthy school environment for students is absolutely essential before any learning can take place. Only when that is accomplished can we engage and educate our students. Each day, you provide students with the skills necessary to meet the challenges of the future. You train them today so that one day they will be prepared to tackle tomorrow’s toughest challenges. On a daily basis, students are exposed to leading researchers conducting studies to find solutions to Mississippi’s most pressing problems, including obesity/health issues, early childhood education, and conservation and sustainability programs.

Students learn first-hand about the challenges of today and tomorrow. University of Mississippi Medical Center students help Jackson citizens get the medical care they need at the Jackson Free Clinic. Students at Delta State University learn about the effects of poverty in their work at the Center for Community and Economic Development, which engages in development, teaching, outreach, and research programs that improve and enhance the quality of life in the Mississippi Delta region and advances strategies to use university resources to address poverty in the region.

Students in the Nutrition and Hospitality Management program at the University of Mississippi are helping tackle the problem of childhood obesity in the Delta, with the help of a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation. Their work takes them to K-12 schools throughout the region and gives them the opportunity to help children learn how to lead healthier lives well into adulthood.

Students at Mississippi University for Women learn about the challenges millions of Americans have with basic communication skills. MUW’s Speech and Hearing Center is open to the public and provides diagnostic evaluations and treatment to all ages for a wide variety of communication disorders.

Jackson State University students learn about using nanosensors in the purification of water and cleaning contaminants from food samples at their Center for Nanoscience and Nanotechnology. Whether working on unmanned aerial vehicles at the Raspet Flight Research Laboratory at Mississippi State University or learning about radiation monitoring/measuremment and nuclear instrumentation laboratories at the Systems Research Institute at Alcorn State University, students are also exposed to cutting-edge technology and research.

Students at the Mississippi Polymer Institute at the University of Mississippi are learning how polymer science can improve many of the products we use on a daily basis, such as laptop and cell phones, and reduce our use of electricity by developing more cost-efficient solar panels.

While the topics of study can vary widely, the most important lesson any educator can teach their students is to approach any situation with integrity. Leading by example is the best teaching method for this. Operating our schools with a culture of integrity demonstrates to our students that integrity is the foundation upon which all success is built. Their individual success is crucial for the collective success of our state and our nation.

Dr. Hank M. Bounds
Commissioner of Higher Education

**This We Believe**

1. The welfare of students must be placed above all other considerations. Our top priority is the education of children.

2. Educators are professionals and must be compensated adequately both with respect and salary commensurate with the training, experience, and the importance of their work.

3. As educators, we encourage respect for our profession through the practice of the highest standards of personal and professional conduct.

4. Teachers, administrators, parents, and students should work together to promote a positive environment to promote learning. Each group must interact with responsibility to and respect for others.

5. Students have the right to an uninterrupted education. Therefore, MPE will not participate in strikes, threats of strikes, walkouts, or other such actions.

6. The teaching and practice of citizenship rights and responsibilities in our democracy should be a high priority for every educator. As individuals, educators should be actively involved in the political process. However, as an organization, MPE does not participate in the campaign of any candidate or political party.

7. Every employee and every group should have the right to appear before the Board of Trustees. No one group should ever be privileged to the exclusion of others.

8. Educators should not be forced to join or pay unified dues to any organization and we will work diligently to keep Mississippi teachers from ever being placed in such a position.
MPE Regional Training

MPE is pleased to offer the following regional training sessions. Participants will receive .6 CEU credits for each full day course. Sessions will be provided at NO COST for MPE members. The cost for non-members is $25. Each session’s content is timely for educators during the 2012-2013 school year. The goal for the sessions is to increase the understanding of teachers for Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and provide strategies for planning and delivering best practice instruction to improve student achievement on MCT2 and/or SATP while using learning activities aligned to CCSS.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Session Title</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTING LITERACY STANDARDS IN GRADES 6-12</td>
<td>Itawamba CC (Belden Center)</td>
<td>Thursday, September 6, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTEGRATING MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE STANDARDS WITH MATHEMATICAL CONTENT STANDARDS, GRADES K-5</td>
<td>University of MS (Oxford)</td>
<td>Friday, September 7, 2012</td>
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<tr>
<td>IMPLEMENTING LITERACY STANDARDS IN GRADES K-5</td>
<td>Mississippi State (Starkville)</td>
<td>Thursday, September 13, 2012</td>
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<td>INTEGRATING MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE STANDARDS WITH MATHEMATICAL CONTENT STANDARDS, GRADES 6-12</td>
<td>Delta State</td>
<td>Thursday, September 20, 2012</td>
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<td>IMPLEMENTING LITERACY STANDARDS IN GRADES 6-12</td>
<td>Meridian CC</td>
<td>Friday, September 21, 2012</td>
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<td>INTEGRATING MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE STANDARDS WITH MATHEMATICAL CONTENT STANDARDS, GRADES K-5</td>
<td>Hinds CC (Rankin Campus/Pearl)</td>
<td>Friday, October 5, 2012</td>
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<td>IMPLEMENTING LITERACY STANDARDS IN GRADES K-5</td>
<td>Gulf Coast CC</td>
<td>Thursday, October 18, 2012</td>
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<td>INTEGRATING MATHEMATICAL PRACTICE STANDARDS WITH MATHEMATICAL CONTENT STANDARDS, GRADES 6-12</td>
<td>Southwest Mississippi Community College</td>
<td>Friday, October 19, 2012</td>
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For more information or to register, contact Brennan Burkard at brennan@mpe.org or (800)523-0269.
WHY MPE?
The premier package of benefits for the least amount of money!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 - 2013 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATION(S)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional with liability insurance</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>$441* - $498*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couples with liability insurance</td>
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<td>-NA-</td>
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<td>First Year Professional</td>
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<td>Non-certified or part-time with insurance</td>
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<td>$238*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Teacher with insurance</td>
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<td>$21*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired Educator without insurance</td>
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<td>$60*</td>
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* May not include local dues

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

Legal assistance related to employment or professional matters per MPE policy

$10,000 in accidental death & dismemberment coverage

$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

Classroom Grant opportunities

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.