Back to School!

2013-2014 Classroom Grants
My Favorite Teacher

National Board Certification
MPE Board Retreat Highlights
“And They’re Off!”

When I was growing up, a major grocery chain sponsored “Let’s Go to the Races!” on TV each week. As I remember, with purchases, customers received a scratch-off card with the name of your winning horse in the race. I imagine there was some discount or reward if your horse won that upcoming Thursday night, but what I really remember is the fun my brother Gary and I had cheering our horse when it was announced “And they’re off!” The excitement was boundless during the race time as we each cheered for ‘our’ horse! Of course, at the end of the race, there was utter exhaustion regardless of our horse’s standings!

Hmmm. The whole experience just described is rather similar to the school year, isn’t it? Think about it. From the first day of school, there is a frenzy of activity. Between planning, meetings, technology integration, decorating, rescheduling, and actually teaching, 187 days can morph into one huge race.

So as we continue into the fall of this school year, here are questions to consider:

1) Do you have a destination or are you just running around in circles? Remember that each horse finishes a race in the same place it began. In order for you to avoid this situation, set goals for yourself in areas like student achievement, professional or personal growth, organization, punctuality, or professional relationships with coworkers.

2) Do you have a winning attitude and determination? A winning horse does. Picture one. This horse has trained relentlessly for this moment, not stopping to rest or to be distracted by other horses. In the home stretch, he leans toward the finish line, breathing deeply, focused on the best outcome, intent only on what matters. Let those phrases describe you this school year! Focus on the important things. Don’t give up! “Finish strong!” is what my administrator Suzanne Hollingshead says. Keep moving when things look difficult or even impossible. Team up with a coworker to keep each other ‘spurred on’!

3) Do you periodically self-reflect? A winning jockey stops at points during training to determine effective/ineffective strategies. He even steers his horse in new directions during the race if he sees a better path available! He does not spend time and effort using strategies that are not working, but replaces them with fresh, sometimes out-of-the-box ideas. Remember that he keeps using those strategies that are proving worthwhile, so don’t forget to be proud of things you are doing well!

Likewise, as a group, Mississippi Professional Educators has a vision to further education in our state. We remain determined to achieve forward progress!

So how is your school year going thus far? Are you in an unending circular race or do you have goals, positive determination, and regular self-reflection in your life? Utilize these tips and I bet your year will be productive!

Donna Robbins

“What is the most important thing one learns in school? Self-esteem, support, and friendship.” - Terry Tempest Williams

Kelly Riley

The above quote seems very appropriate for the start of a new school year. It reminds me of the friendships I built with my classmates and teachers, as well as the critical foundation for my future which was built during my school years. I was fortunate enough to attend my 30th high school reunion (Pass Christian High School Class of 1984) this summer. It was wonderful to reconnect with old friends who were so active in my life many years ago. In today’s world of accountability standards, testing and curriculum changes, I hope you will always value the role you play in your students’ lives and the impact that your classroom activities will have on them for years to come.

As you start this new school year, please take the time to review your employee handbook, as it contains critical policies impacting your position. Even if you have been in the same school or district for years, it is important for you to review these policies and procedures that you will be expected to uphold. You do not want to be placed in a situation later this year due to your not being aware of a policy change because you have not reviewed your handbook.

We’ve spent these past few summer months here in the office planning for another successful year. As I write this article on August 1, we are in the midst of planning for our regional trainings around the state. We will offer two trainings in each of our eight MPE districts. Training topics will include SPED and CCSS for English language arts (K-5 and 6-12), as well as CCSS for math (K-5 and 6-12). Look for additional information in my future weekly emails.

MPE encourages its members to pursue National Board Certification. Certification is a rigorous, peer-reviewed process that ensures that Board-certified teachers have proven skills to advance student achievement. The National Board has recently reflected on its own practices and revised its certification process. Our feature article on pages 12 and 13 provides you additional information on this important professional development resource.

MPE loves to recognize its members and the critical work you are doing in classrooms throughout our great state. Sixteen members received our 2013-2014 classroom grants of up to $500 for their class projects and instructional programs last fall. We’ve spotlighted five of these on pages 10 and 11. This year’s application deadline recently passed on August 29 and we will soon be awarding this year’s grants to our members to enhance their classrooms and their students’ experiences.

I’ve saved the best for last… I’m thrilled to announce that Dr. Eric Jensen will deliver our keynote address at our 2015 Best Practices Symposium. Dr. Jensen has authored over 26 books, including Teaching with Poverty in Mind, Tools for Engagement, Turnaround Tools for the Teenage Brain, and Teaching with the Brain in Mind. We are honored to have a practitioner and researcher of his caliber to join us. Please mark your calendars and plan to join us on Saturday, April 11, at the Jackson Hilton.

Have a wonderful year!
After learning about the people, places, and events of China, we hosted “A Taste of China” for parents. We set our tables with porcelain, which they had learned was invented in China. Prior to this culminating activity, the students had practiced the proper way to hold/use chopsticks with packing peanuts; therefore, they were able to show off their chopstick etiquette! Since students had learned about Chinese tea ceremonies, we had our own. Most had never had hot tea before, so this was another new experience. As parents ate, they were able to view the many projects students had created throughout our study of China.

This unit provided hands-on learning experiences in an environment that fostered critical and creative thinking, investigative learning, and teamwork. Students were so engaged that they forgot it was that time of the school year that typically brings ‘spring fever’ - all because of a fresh start during the middle of the school year!

I encourage you to find opportunities for fresh starts throughout this school year. Find out who your students really are. What are their interests/hobbies? These are great relationship builders for you and your students as well as ways to hook them on learning, guiding them to further develop their strengths! Challenge yourself this year to be as involved in the learning process as you would want your students to be. How will you incorporate fresh starts with your students this year?

“Gung Hay Fat Choy!”

Fresh starts are vital for everyone. One of the things I love about our profession is the beginning of a new school year. As a child I enjoyed shopping for school supplies - oh, the smell of a new pencil case and binder! As a teacher I enjoy the process of reflecting on the past year as I anticipate and prepare for my students’ arrivals.

This summer my classroom received a new paint job that had me giddy with ideas for cleaning out the old to make room for the new! A new school year gives educators a second chance at New Year’s resolutions as they relate to our professional responsibilities and opportunities. I believe we are fortunate to have fresh starts in our profession.

Last February, my students received a fresh start in the middle of the school year as we kicked off a study of China with Chinese New Year. The students created dragons, banners, instruments, and costumes after researching the custom of Chinese New Year. The students paraded through the halls of our school under their team-created dragons shouting, “Gung Hay Fat Choy!” as they showcased their handiwork in our very own Chinese New Year Parade. The Chinese practice the tradition of sweeping out the old to make room for the New Year. This, they believe, brings good luck and fortune. What an appropriate practice for us as educators as we sweep in the 2014-15 school year!

Our parade was a great hook for a unit on the customs, inventions, and study of China. After brainstorming what they already knew and would like to know about China, the students rotated through China-themed, hands-on centers and researched to find answers to questions/inquiries formed to complete their K-W-L chart. Each student chose a China topic for an independent research project. They took notes using a variety of sources and chose a product to create and present along with research. The class created rubrics for presentation speeches and products including: game shows, models, posters, puzzles, and Power-Point presentations. When projects were complete, the students took turns presenting as their peers evaluated using their class-created rubrics.

The MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 18-20 in Starkville. The board hosted a reception for local legislators and educational leaders on Wednesday evening. Among other guests, the board was honored to visit with Senator Angela Turner, as well as Dr. Richard Blackbourn, Elton Moore and Amy Prisock from Mississippi State University’s College of Education.

Thursday’s planning meeting included discussions regarding MPE’s 2015 Best Practices Symposium, as well as regional trainings and classroom grants. The Board held its quarterly meeting on Friday. The MPE Board of Directors continues to give much of its time and efforts toward MPE’s growth and success.

The MPE Board of Directors gives a great deal of its time to the continued success of MPE.
LOWERY RECEIVES PH.D.

Jennifer Hancock Lowery, of Laurel, received her Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from William Carey University on May 16, 2014. This year’s commencement ceremony was the first time that William Carey has offered the Doctor of Philosophy degree and Lowery was one of the first three recipients of this esteemed honor. She is a 1991 honor graduate of Northeast Jones High School. She received an A.A. degree from Jones County Junior College in 1993. She further obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in biology from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1995 and a Master of Education degree from William Carey College in 1999. In 2012, she completed an Educational Specialist degree in Higher Education Administration from William Carey University.

Under the direction of Dr. Jalynn Roberts, Lowery wrote and successfully defended a dissertation titled “Perceptions of Students in Developmental Education Programs Toward Future College Work.” Lowery began teaching in Collins and she has been in the Jones County School District for 18 years. In Jones County, she has taught high school biology and Advanced Placement History, and she has also taught high school biology and Advanced Placement History. Placement History, and she has also taught in the county’s gifted program, Star Reach.

SHIRLEY HONORED AS STAR TEACHER

Vicki Shirley was recognized in April by the Mississippi Economic Council as STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition) Teacher for the Corinth School District. Mrs. Shirley is a math teacher at Corinth High School. She has been a member of MPE since 1982. A former MPE Board Member, Shirley serves as her school’s MPE Building Representative. Shirley was inadvertently not recognized in the spring issue of the MPE Journal for receiving this STAR Teacher honor. Congratulations, Vicki!

DACE SELECTED AS SUPERINTENDENT

The State Board of Education approved Dr. Debra Dace as superintendent of the new Sunflower County Consolidated School District at its meeting in July. A member of MPE since 2012, Dr. Dace previously served as the curriculum and testing coordinator for the Tunica County School District. Sunflower County Consolidated School District consists of the former Drew, Indianola and Sunflower County districts.

MPE wants to recognize outstanding educators who exemplify true professionalism and go above and beyond the call of duty every day. To nominate an Educator of Excellence, please visit www.mpe.org to fill out a nomination form. You may also contact our office at 800-523-0269.

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Engineers in the Making allowed students to participate in a yearlong adventure with STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) that will lead them on the path to become our future engineers. Students, through a series of hands-on activities, studied the Engineering Design Process. Along with research of engineering disciplines and Q & A sessions with numerous engineers, students gained an understanding of the engineering profession. The knowledge students gained from the above activities was used to make presentations to their peers that included a presentation of their research followed by a hands-on activity to further understanding.

Carly Parker
Harper McCaughan Elementary
Engineers in the Making

Mrs. Parker’s group is the “index card making” group. Index cards are the start of a search and a beginning of an exploration. They are the first steps in an investigation. Students learned to work together, share ideas, and think big. The teachers placed students in groups of four to five and gave them a simple task to complete. Each group was given a rule to follow, a material to work with, and a criterion to evaluate their product. Once the groups completed their task, they presented their project to the class. The students then evaluated each other’s presentations and provided feedback. The goal was to encourage students to think critically and creatively, and to work collaboratively to solve problems.
Countless studies have confirmed what many Mississippi public educators already know. When it comes to factors in a school’s control, teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement. Given this information, it’s clear that if we truly want to help our students excel academically, we must invest as much as possible in our teaching force.

With changes to education policies, teachers must constantly prove their accomplishments and effectiveness with students by meeting standards set by those who do not work daily in the classroom. Sometimes the outside pressures can be so intense that we dismiss our professional skills and accomplishments. Yet the qualities embodied by accomplished teachers remain constant and those qualities are what define National Board Certification.

That number may seem significant, but in reality National Board Certified Teachers make up less than four percent of the teaching profession. To make the dramatic improvements we all seek in education for every student, National Board Certification needs to be the norm, not the exception.

To make this happen, the National Board revised its highly rigorous certification process to remove barriers such as cost and time. These revisions, which have nothing to do with truly accomplished teaching, allowed the National Board to maintain the integrity and transformative nature of National Board Certification while also incorporating the latest research on effective teaching.

Just as the National Board asks teachers to reflect on their practice, the organization reflects on the standards. This ensures that the certification process mirrors the evolving nature of the profession and current best practices in teaching.

The major benefit of the revised process is that educators will have more flexibility. While teachers can complete the entire certification process in one year, some may choose to do so over several years if that fits better with other life demands. While maintaining the same level of rigor, the process will have four components that assess content knowledge and focus on reflective practice in the classroom and student work. Additionally, the cost of certification is now reduced to $1,900 and now allows candidates to pay as they go.

Though the process is changing, the National Board’s principles remain the same. This means the National Board Standards, the Five Core Propositions, and the Architecture of Accomplished Teaching will not change. National Board Certification remains performance-based and peer-reviewed with the same emphasis on content knowledge and commitment to student learning.

Moreover, a growing body of research affirms the positive impact of Board Certification on student achievement. Studies show that students taught by National Board Certified Teachers score higher on achievement tests than their peers without Board-certified teachers. In one study, these gains were equivalent to an extra month of instruction in math and English language arts. Imagine the possibilities for students, particularly those in low-income areas, if all of their teachers were Board-certified!

Many Mississippi teachers consider certification to be the single most rewarding professional commitment they have made. The positive and practical impact of Board-certified teachers in their classrooms draws many to the reflective process. Others pursue certification because they learn new techniques that can be immediately applied to the classroom. What’s more is that Board-certified teachers benefit from the support of a growing network of peers, both locally and across the country.

Fortunately, Mississippi does understand the need to invest in its teaching force and the impact that Board-certified teachers have on student achievement. Our great state has demonstrated this knowledge and commitment by providing a salary increase for all Board-certified teachers as well as by creating organizations designed to assist teachers who pursue National Board Certification. Moreover, our state has collaborated with the HBCU Jackson State University (JSU) to ensure that our state’s teacher pool contains a solid representation of African American educators that are Board-certified.

Mississippi has a strong history of support for National Board Certification dating back to the 1990s. To date, more than 3,500 Mississippi teachers have achieved National Board Certification. Education leaders and current NBCTs are also working with the National Board to train and support early-career teacher candidates through the World Class Teaching Program at five universities across the state (Jackson State University, Mississippi State University, Delta State University, University of Southern Mississippi, and University of Mississippi) to ensure our state has a robust pipeline of accomplished teachers for all students.

To encourage other veteran teachers to pursue board certification, Mississippi has established a program for candidates to receive low-interest loans from designated banks in our state that are reimbursed by the state upon completion of the certification process.

Applications for the revised certification process are available now and teachers should take advantage of summer planning if they wish to pursue Board certification.
**My Favorite Teacher:**

**Deedre’ Coll**  
2013-2014 MPE President/Lead Teacher, Oak Grove Primary

My Favorite Teacher: Dr. Stacy Reeves  
School: William Carey University  
Subject: Master’s Courses

“Dr. Stacy Reeves is my favorite teacher for many reasons. She was my first professor at William Carey when I began my graduate work in 2002. She used her own elementary classroom experiences to inspire and guide me to become a better teacher. Her teaching methods were very innovative and fresh and I learned so much from her. I enjoyed her class so much that I took at least four more classes with her while working on my Master’s degree.

Stacy continues to be a friend and a mentor to me. She encouraged me and helped me to grow over the past ten years.”

**Erica Armstrong**  
MPE Board of Directors/Ast. Principal, Shadow oaks Elementary

My Favorite Teacher: Lesley Cotten  
School: Clarksdale High School  
Subject: 11th & 12th Grade Science/Biology

“Ms. Cotten’s Biology class was very informative and interesting. On a daily basis she made us want to learn and always reminded us of the high expectations she had for us and our future. Ms. Cotten not only strove to ensure we understood the biological concepts, but also served as a mentor. She genuinely cared about our future as well as counseled us in our times of need. Having a teacher that cared about not only your grades for the semester/year, but your life after high school, distinguishes her from other teachers I’ve had in my life.

Thank you, Ms. Lesley Cotten!”

**Cheryl Earnest Howard**  
MPE Board of Directors/Teacher, Quitman Co. Elementary

My Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Paula Whatley  
School: Marks Elementary  
Subject: 1st Grade

“My 1st grade teacher introduced me to the love of learning and what a wonderful, positive impact she had on my life. She was full of life every day and instilled the value of learning in everyone. She was a teacher that cared and it was obvious, even to me as a child. She and I are still friends and we talk frequently. I love chatting with her about the ‘thens and nows’ of teaching, but it all comes back to ‘heart;’ You must love teaching and she did and because of that I loved learning and teaching.”

**Dr. Lela Hale**  
MPE Secretary-Treasurer/Ast. Professor of Education, Blue Mountain College

My Favorite Teacher: Mrs. Mary Jo Hannah  
School: Sallie Cochran Elementary  
Subject: 1st Grade

“One of my fondest memories of school is of my first grade teacher, Mrs. Mary Jo Hannah. She was not new to our family, as she also taught my second brother two years prior to having me. It was through his books that I was introduced to Sally, Dick, and Jane and later read them in Mrs. Hannah’s room. She was an innovative teacher who also saw the need to teach phonics in the afternoons after having had the traditional basal in the mornings. She included the family by having us bring in items for things like the science experiment of deciding whether salt or pepper would sink or float. She had us sharpen crayons for her to iron between two pieces of waxed paper and place under the cut-out leaf shape we chose from a nature walk. These were displayed on the windows in our classroom. She cuddled my love for art! She was the most kind, compassionate teacher a child could ever have. I don’t think I ever heard a harsh word from her, although she had a way of making us feel ashamed for not doing our best or for saying something unkind to a classmate. She had high expectations for us and we wanted to meet those expectations. Due to her being such a positive role model, I decided then and there to become a teacher. By the way, I practice taught in first grade and later taught kindergarten and first grade for a total of 16 years. I was fortunate enough to reunite with Mrs. Hannah while attending classes for graduate school at Delta State University. We graduated with our Master’s degrees sitting side-by-side!”

That time of year again---do you still get excited? This begins my 14th year of retirement and I still had to look around the school supplies in the store and buy a new box of twistable colored pencils.

There are so many opportunities for us as retired educators and the choices are ours. For those who aren’t continuing to work part-time or in the private sector but want to be involved, there is always a place to volunteer. Our education system can still use our experiences or maybe you decide to go in a completely different direction and do something with your other talents. Then again, isn’t it nice to be able to just not do anything if that is what we choose to do—like using my new colored pencils in my “grown up coloring book.”

If you are newly retired, be sure you have updated your contact information with the office so you won’t miss any emails. We will be sending out special emails whenever legislation or other information concerning our retirement is available.

I’m excited about our new lifetime membership for retirees. This costs $70 and you can put renewals out of your mind as you are busy enjoying retirement.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you on our board. Please feel free to call or email me if I can help you in any way. 662-588-9011 or email me at philene-allen@bellsouth.net.

**Philene Allen**  
MPE Board of Directors, Retirees

Ms. Paula Whatley  
Sallie Cochran Elementary  
My Favorite Teacher: 1st Grade

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The slogan at Thames is “work hard, get smart” and it has proven that it has been doing something right. Its scores were the highest in the Hattiesburg District for 2012-13. In fact, the year before its QDI (Quality Distribution Index), the composite score based on the students’ MCT2 scores, was 157 (growth unmet) and during 2012-13 it was 170 (growth met).

At Thames Elementary there are 730 enrolled from pre-school through the 6th grade. Eighty-one percent of the students receive free lunches and many are from lower socio-economic backgrounds with limited academic emphasis provided in the home. During the previous year, it became evident to the administration, teachers, staff, students and parents that there was a great deal of work needed for the school’s rating to improve.

The principal, Carrie Hornsby, as a strong instructional leader, informed the teachers that they could be moved to a different classroom that would best fit the needs of the students. Also during the first week of school, the teachers were asked to spend time building relationships with the students. They had to know that the teacher cares about them since that is a key to academic success. Mrs. Hornsby emphasized that if the connections were made, the students would want to come and would be motivated to learn. Secondly, for the school to be orderly and safe, everyone must know and follow the policies and procedures. The PBIS (Positive Behavior Incentive System) is used throughout the program and then post-tests are administered to show mastery. The students who have not mastered the required material are remediated until they show mastery.

The third step was to utilize the assessments in order to know the instructional levels in the classrooms and to find out through inventories the best way to reach each individual student. Since Thames has a highly diverse student body, the academic gaps between students are huge. The teachers use differentiated instruction in their classrooms based on pre-test results. Formative assessments are included throughout the program and then post-tests are administered to show mastery. The students who have not mastered the required material are remediated until they show mastery.

In most of the classrooms, teachers utilize “centers” for the primary students or “work stations” for the older students during the day. Since they are aware of the needs of the students, they plan lessons that help them succeed and build on their weakest areas. Teachers were provided with professional development so they were prepared to provide what they were asked to do. Also, PLCs (Professional Learning Committees) met once a week so that the teachers were able to plan together. An academic coach, Tracy Robinson, worked with the teachers to make sure they not only knew their students, but how to use the data available in order to teach them. Also with enough computers provided for a group of students in the classrooms, and a smart board for every teacher, the use of technology for each day was an important part of instruction.

In addition to helping the teachers, the parents were also targeted. In order for the communication to be more specific and intentional, there were three different parent sessions during the year. The parents were taught what they needed in order to help their children. One important key for parents to understand was “self-efficacy” so that they could help their children understand that if you believe you can do it, you can do it.

Dr. James Bacchus, the district’s superintendent, has requested that all the schools in the district follow Thames’s example. Mrs. Hornsby was named “Administrator of the Year” in the Hattiesburg District for the second time in four years. She has stated that she would like the scores to continue to go up at the school. “We have to continue to make positive progress. We have to get the students college and career ready. My ultimate responsibility is to make sure the kids can be successful in high school and can graduate.”

The Common Core Standards have been used for several years for lesson planning at Thames with the PARCC (Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers) in mind that will be used throughout the state next year. It is definitely a challenge for all schools in the state, but especially for a school like Thames that has to work even harder and smarter to show the desired progress.

However, as the administration, faculty, students and parents all work together to prepare the students to become college and career ready, the school plans to meet the challenge. Mrs. Hornsby believes that “It’s not just about the test or to be recognized as an ‘A’ school, but more about the amount of growth every child is able to make.” It is evident that the students at Thames know how to “work hard” and “get smart!”
The law states that a student scoring equally as important that students in 3rd grade to read on grade level. It’s say that it’s not enough for students in kindergarten through 2nd grade are the foundation for all learning. I often make your plans for the school year. As we launch a school year filled with change and transition, I wanted to share some information with you that I believe will be of importance as you make your plans for the school year. First of all, reading will continue to be emphasized this year, particularly as the Mississippi Literacy-based Promotion Act begins its first year of implementation. We all know that reading is the foundation for all learning. I often say that it’s not enough for students in 3rd grade to read on grade level. It’s equally as important that students in kindergarten through 2nd grade are being grade-level requirements.

The law states that a student scoring at the lowest achievement level in reading on the established state assessment for 3rd grade will not be promoted to 4th grade unless the student meets the good cause exemptions for promotion. In an effort to support schools in their literacy efforts, the MDE has deployed educators with expertise in literacy to a number of targeted schools with the lowest reading scores across Mississippi to assist teachers with reading instruction strategies. The MDE also has hired additional specialists with expertise in literacy and has placed them in regional locations across the state to provide ongoing assistance to teachers and principals in all of our schools.

Additional training also has been provided to teachers in non-targeted schools. The MDE stands ready to work with you to make sure that every student has the chance to succeed. I firmly believe that MDE is in service to our school districts and we are partners in your efforts to raise student achievement.

New kindergarten assessments will be implemented this year so that you can have a better idea of what our little ones know and are able to do when they enter the classrooms. We hope information from this assessment will better help you target resources to help students who are behind their peers and to challenge students who are ahead.

A Universal Screening Assessment will be administered to 1st through 3rd grade students, typically at least three times during the year, to provide a critical “first look” at individual students and inform instruction. It should also be noted that as described in state law, school districts must communicate regularly with parents about their children’s reading performance to ensure they receive the appropriate supports and interventions as needed.

The MDE continues to make improvements to the principal and teacher evaluations. Over the past year we have requested feedback from educators, administrators, and superintendents and we have heard your concerns and have been working to address them. While we have made modifications, we look forward to reviewing the evaluation scores from this year and will continue working to improve the evaluation systems and to include a broader range of evaluators as we move forward.

Dr. Carey M. Wright
State Superintendent of Education

Just as this school year gets under way, Mississippi Public Universities turn their attention to next year as we submit our budget request to the Legislative Budget Office and prepare for our hearing, where we have the opportunity to discuss the needs of our universities and students with those who will craft the Legislative Budget Recommendation.

The Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning has approved a request that includes an additional $42 million over last year’s funding. Of this, $34 million will be used for campus operations and $8 million will be allocated to the universities based on the performance-based allocation model approved by the Board last year.

Following a national trend in higher education, the model includes performance measures, including attainment outcomes, such as degrees awarded, intermediate outcomes, such as completing a specified number of credit hours, research activity, which only applies to the four research universities, and productivity outcomes, such as the number of degrees awarded per enrollment and revenue. The model also considers the varying costs incurred when teaching individual courses and operating the campus as a whole.

The remaining $8 million is designated for special projects of the Board. Last year, the Legislature appropriated $17 million for repair and renovation needs, which helped the universities to maintain facilities without having to use operations dollars that could be directed to the classroom. We will request this same amount for this purpose.

Our universities recognize the need to increase faculty salaries. We know that we are in a very competitive environment for education. We compete for students and the best faculty, researchers and staff. It is important that we offer the compensation packages necessary to attract and retain those who are the best in their fields. They are the heart and soul of the university and are charged with delivering the best education possible to our students.

According to the Southern Regional Education Board’s 2013 Fact Book on Higher Education, in 2012, the average full-time faculty salary at public four-year colleges and universities in Mississippi was $45,854 lower than the national average and $1,462 lower than the regional average.

We will request a $7.6 million increase in State Student Financial Aid to fund changes to the program that were passed by the Legislature last year. Beginning in 2015, the income limit for applicants to apply for the HELP Scholarship Program will increase. Created by the Mississippi Legislature, the Higher Education Legislative Plan (HELP) program is designed to provide tuition assistance to qualified students whose financial need, as demonstrated by federal student aid eligibility, will not be met with gift aid from other sources. The legislation also authorized students eligible for the Mississippi Eminent Scholars Grant to receive the award after returning to Mississippi, provided they have not earned more than 36 hours of credit at an out-of-state institution.

Mississippi Public Universities provide the highest quality education to our students and are an excellent return on investment to our state. This budget request reflects the resources needed by the universities to help meet the needs of our students and our state. While the needs of the state are great, it is important to remember that the dollars invested in higher education will pay dividends for generations to come.
On July 1, Mr. Bruce Martin from Meridian and Mr. Tom Gresham from Indianola began serving one year terms as chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the Mississippi Community College Board. Mr. Martin, who served as vice-chair last year, succeeded Mr. Chip Crane from Fulton as chair. I thank Mr. Crane for serving as chairman and for providing outstanding leadership. I look forward to working with Mr. Martin and Mr. Gresham in their new leadership roles.

Back in June, Dr. Glenn Boyce stepped down as president at Holmes Community College to take a position at IHL. Dr. Boyce had served as president of the college since 2005. One of his many accomplishments while leading the college includes record enrollments. He was also the college Presidents’ Association “point-person” on performance measures for the system. As I write this, Dr. David Cole, long-time president of Itawamba Community College who retired back in 2013, is serving as the interim president at Holmes.

During the past few years, the Legislature has re-committed itself to enacting performance funding for all state agencies and as a result, state leaders released a Statewide Strategic Plan in July that includes sections on K-12, community colleges, and universities.

For our community colleges, some of the benchmarks that will be used for future funding include college readiness, student progress, student graduation rates, and workforce development statistics. Community college costs to both students and taxpayers will also be analyzed. Once implemented, this type of funding will be significantly different from our old model, which was based largely on enrollment at our individual colleges.

Senate Bill No. 2563, passed during the 2014 legislative session, requires our agency, along with the state university system, to write a report for the Legislature by November 3, 2014, that addresses the prevention of unintended pregnancies among older teens. According to statistics from the Department of Health, there were 5,644 pregnancies among Mississippi teenagers in 2012 and of this, 3,913—a large majority—were among women ages eighteen and nineteen. For those who are attending community college, they often experience difficulties in balancing caring for a baby and school. As a result, many drop out and never complete their education. I am hopeful that a result of this study will be our community colleges and universities receiving additional resources in the future to help combat this problem.

The start of a new school year brings with it endless possibilities for you as an instructor and the students you teach. You have the opportunity to make better the lives of thousands, whether they are elementary, high school, community college, or university students. I hope that each of you has a wonderful year and I thank you for the job you do. Let us know if we at MCCB can help make your school year better.
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Move to Learn gives our students the opportunity to get their blood pumping and their brains ready for learning.”

ALISON BLOCK, PRINCIPAL
MAGNOLIA PARK ELEMENTARY

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MEREDITH BROWN, TEACHER
NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY

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Dr. Eric Jensen, author of over 26 books including Teaching with Poverty in Mind, Tools for Engagement, Turnaround Tools for the Teenage Brain: Helping Underperforming Students Become Lifelong Learners, and Teaching with the Brain in Mind, will be our keynote speaker.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2014 - 2015 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATION(S)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional with liability insurance</td>
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<td>Retired Educator without insurance</td>
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* May not include local dues

Professional liability protection of $2 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
Only organization to provide identity theft coverage with membership
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Every dollar of your dues stays in Mississippi for your benefit!
MPE does not utilize dues to support political candidates.