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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Angela Towers

As all Mississippi educators enter into the 2015-2016 school year, I would like to wish each of you much success. It is my hope that you are able to reach and positively touch the lives of every student with which you come in contact. While using our work days to impact the knowledge base and influence the lives of our students, we should use some of our leisure time to educate ourselves, as well as our friends, family, and other educational stakeholders on the significance of Initiative 42. This historical initiative will determine whether the legislature will be required to fully fund education. This could possibly be the only opportunity to rectify the dilemma of our students lacking resources, opportunities, and personnel needed for a world-class education and compete for skilled jobs.

Attorney General Jim Hood recently issued an opinion that public school teachers, administrators and staff may publicly support Initiative 42 as long as they do so on their own time. The opinion states, “that school employees may voluntarily participate in political activities as long as their participation in such activities is in the hours when they are not involved in their work-related duties.” This opinion is posted on MPE’s website and you may view it by visiting www.mpe.org/mpe/mpe_news_detail.php?n=428.

Mississippi Professional Educators is the vision and voice for almost 13,000 Mississippi educators and thousands of citizens. As a professional association, our sixth principle of belief states, “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.” Thus, we strongly urge our members to be actively involved in the political process. How can you be involved in this important decision in one of the following:

• Regional trainings: See page 22 for details regarding our regional trainings throughout the state on Mississippi’s College and Career Readiness Standards. These FREE trainings for MPE members offer CEUs.
• Graduate scholarships: Our 2016 graduate scholarship application will be posted in the “Quick Links” section of our website (www.mpe.org) in December.
• 2016 Best Practices Symposium: Save April 9, 2016, on your calendar to join us at symposium where Dr. Harry Wong will deliver our keynote address!

We love to celebrate and share good news in the weekly email or our MPE Journal about the incredible work happening in schools around Mississippi! You may email me your good news at kelly@mpe.org. Don’t forget to share your school’s achievements and successes with us.

I wish you only the best for this 2015-2016 school year! Thank you for all of your efforts and incredible work. You have the opportunity each day to positively impact the future of our state and country!
From the youngest child in flame resistant pajamas, humans are taught to fear fire and its potential impact. Each school-aged child is taught, “Stop, Drop and Roll” and routine fire drills ensure that each student and teacher knows the proper procedure for escaping peril. Perhaps, however, teachers should be more proactive when it comes to igniting fires in our schools. William Butler Yeats once wrote, “Education is not the filling of a pot, but the lighting of a fire.” In 2008, Timothy A. Pychyl, Ph.D., wrote, “All fires are different. Some just seem to burst into flames and rage...other fires, while ultimately successful, have to be gently nurtured from remnants of glowing coals or from accessing the inner dry wood in what appears to be a soggy log. Lighting the fire of student engagement is no different, and each student requires a different approach...while the science remains the same.” In looking at the science of fire, there are three components to be considered: ignition, fuel, and air.

There are multiple ways to ignite a fire. Rafe Esquith relates a story within his classroom in which he accidentally sets his hair on fire in the course of a science experiment. As a result, he saw the excitement of the unexpected light a fire in his students’ eyes as they worked together to master a concept. He related that though the experiment was imperfect, his engagement within the learning process made all the difference to his students, and conversely, to him. He determined that day to always teach like his hair was on fire as he joined with his students on the journey of discovery. Literally lighting one’s hair on fire is not recommended, but being the ignition of the flame of curiosity in the mind of a child should be the goal of every teacher. Requiring teachers to use best practice teaching strategies and requiring students to think outside the box provide the tinder that takes the original ignited spark and transfers it to the kindling that is the ignited curiosity of the student. Much like real kindling that provides the scaffolding to support a large fire, if this curiosity is carefully built and allowed the time to grow and develop, it will result in a strong fire that will sustain larger pieces of complex texts and critical thinking processes.

The next component of fire is the necessary fuel to keep the fire fed and developing. Well-designed, intentional, and techniques are not at the heart of education - fire is. I mean finding light in the darkness, staying warm in the cold world, avoiding being burned if you can, and knowing what brings healing if you can’t. That is the knowledge that our students really want, and that is the knowledge we owe them. Not merely the facts, not merely the theories, but a deep knowing of what it means to kindle the gift of life in ourselves, in others, and in the world” (Palmer, p. x; Foreword to O’Reilly, 1998).

Instead of memorizing them, teachers should spend more time teaching students how to think. Students need to do much more analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.” Analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating text and data are dynamic processes that replicate a literal fire and completely change the original to release the energy of excitement and the light of understanding. These lessons require creativity in grading practices and additional preparation time for teachers as they differentiate instruction for each student. Without this fuel, however, students’ tender, developing fires of learning are extinguished and are replaced with the lukewarm ashes of apathy. It takes an engaged, intentional, determined teacher to search among the ashes to discover the still glowing, hidden embers within each student and to gently rekindle the fire within.

Once these embers are found, the third elemental necessity of fire is contact with air. Good teachers breathe new life into these embers and subsequently “fan the flames” back to life. This requires a student-centered classroom where students are allowed to grow and discover a love of learning under the careful questioning and guiding of an engaged, purposeful teacher. These classrooms produce students who are more confident as they assume leadership roles in the educational process, more collaborative as they share connections between text and their personal lives and more motivated as their interests are explored and contexts are realized. Together, teacher and students engage in the dialogue and excitement of learning to produce new ideas much as the oxygen and flame engage to produce heat.

Parker Palmer, in his book, “The Courage to Teach,” says the following about fire and learning. “Tips, tricks and techniques are not at the heart of education - fire is. I mean finding light in the darkness, staying warm in the cold world, avoiding being burned if you can, and knowing what brings healing if you can’t. That is the knowledge that our students really want, and that is the knowledge we owe them. Not merely the facts, not merely the theories, but a deep knowing of what it means to kindle the gift of life in ourselves, in others, and in the world” (Palmer, p. x; Foreword to O’Reilly, 1998). School is the perfect place to ignite fires!
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

RIDER EARNs PH.D. IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

Dr. Carole Rider, Student Services Coordinator at North Pike Career and Technical Center, recently completed her Ph.D. in Educational Leadership at the University of Southern Mississippi. Her dissertation entitled “Teachers’ Perceptions Of Their Abilities To Respond To An Active Shooter Incident” received the Outstanding Dissertation Award from the Department of Educational Leadership and School Counseling. A member of MPE since 2010, Dr. Rider received her master’s degree in Sports Medicine and Sports Psychology from South Dakota State University and her bachelor’s degree in HPER and Athletic Training from Elmhurst College. Dr. Rider is also a certified athletic trainer and works as an athletic trainer for Mississippi Sports Medicine and Orthopedic Center in Jackson, MS.

Jules-Dunn Earns Specialist in Elementary Education

Stacey Jules-Dunn, a Kindergarten teacher at Oak Forest Elementary School in the Jackson Public School District, graduated from Jackson State University this past May with a Specialist’s Degree in Elementary Education. She previously received her bachelor’s degree in Business Management and her Master’s of Art in Teaching with a concentration in Elementary Education from Jackson State. A member of MPE since 2013, Jules-Dunn was a 2014-2015 MPE classroom grant recipient.

FORMER MPE DIRECTOR INDUCTED INTO UM SCHOOL OF EDUCATION’S HALL OF FAME

Jerome Smith, former director of MPE, was one of three educators inducted this past spring into the inaugural class of the School of Education’s Hall of Fame at the University of Mississippi. Milton Kuykendall, Superintendent of the Desoto County School District, and Judith Reynolds, a 45-year educator from Clinton, joined Smith as inductees.

“We are proud to honor the dedication and accomplishments of these outstanding alumni,” said David Rock, Dean of the School of Education. “Milton Kuykendall, Judith Reynolds and Jerome Smith have made a positive impact on not only their profession but thousands of students and community members in Mississippi.” The inductees were selected for the honor by the University of Mississippi Education Alumni Advisory Board after being nominated by their peers in January.

Smith, who earned a bachelor’s degree in 1948 and a master’s in 1952 from the University of Mississippi, spent more than 52 years in Mississippi dedicated to service and leadership in public education. A World War II veteran, he served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, then attended Ole Miss on the G.I. Bill and later went on to be a teacher and football coach at public schools in Louisiana. He later served as a counselor and principal at multiple schools including Callaway High School, which became the first integrated public school in the state in 1964 under Smith’s leadership. He served as MPE’s director from 1983-1996 before leaving to serve as Governor Kirk Fordice’s education advisor. In his position with Governor Fordice, Smith encouraged the Mississippi Legislature to provide a $6,000-a-year pay increase for national board certified teachers.

CANTRELL TO LEAD MASS

Scott Cantrell is serving as President of the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents (MASS) for the 2015-2016 school year. He is completing his eighth year as Superintendent of the Monroe County School District. Prior to his current position, he served as an administrator at Nettleton High School, as well as Hamilton High School. Cantrell has been a member of MPE since 2013.

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, 2015 and June 30, 2016. 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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At Liberty Mutual Insurance, we’re giving you something in return for everything you give to students. We’re partnered with the MPE to offer exclusive auto insurance savings and benefits to people like you who work to enrich the lives and minds of today’s youth. And these benefits — like a waived deductible if your vehicle is vandalized on school property or while using it for school-related events — are available at no additional cost.¹

To learn more or get a quote, call 800-524-9400 or visit www.libertymutual.com/mpe

¹ See actual policy for terms, conditions, coverage limits and deductibles. Benefits are available to members only. The benefits available in your state may differ from those available to other members. Benefits subject to change without notice. Benefits are not available in all states. Liberty Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116, © 2015 Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. All rights reserved.
2014-2015 CLASSROOM GRANT RECIPIENTS

MPE invites its members to apply for classroom grant funding each year to try out a new idea or buy the “extras” for an already great lesson plan or project. Thirty-five members submitted applications for the 2014-2015 school year, with sixteen members receiving grants of up to $500 for their class projects and instructional program. We are pleased to spotlight several of the grants below for your enjoyment, as well as your reference for ideas for your own classroom.

Emily Mabus
Itawamba Attendance Center-7th Grade, Science
The Purloined Parakeet
Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided my students with a hands-on investigation in my classroom. With this project this year, I had two major goals. My first goal was to provide a different learning experience that could enhance my curriculum and my students’ learning. The second goal was to generate excitement within my classroom about science. This project did just that. Through the grant, I was able to purchase five investigative kits from Carolina Scientific.

Cassie Hudson
Batesville Intermediate School-3rd Grade Reading, Writing, Language Arts
Sound System to Succeed
Thank you MPE for funding my 2014-2015 classroom grant that gave my students a higher regard for their speaking and listening skills in the classroom. I used the funds to purchase a PA system for my students to use during presentations, read-alouds, projects, and many other activities. The portable wireless PA sound system was a great tool that engaged and motivated my students to support and empower each other through their speaking, listening, and presentation skills. Thanks to you, this new form of technology has supported, engaged, and motivated my students to master their speaking and listening standards.

Thomas Reen
South Delta Elementary School-5th Grade, Language Arts
Chess Program
Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided an opportunity to participate in a chess enrichment program to over forty students in the South Delta School District. Our grant was used to purchase additional and improved equipment for our nascent chess program. The results of the increased practice that students have been able to get in after we received our new equipment have been extraordinary! This year alone, we have been to ten state, regional, and national tournaments, and have received accolades at a number of them! We truly appreciate the opportunity this has afforded our students.

Monica Cullen
Leake Central High School-11-12 Grades, Advanced Placement Literature
Comedic Drama Production
Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that permitted my students to work with professional sound equipment in the writing, practice, and production of their comedy. I love and enjoy the theater. I wish to impart this same love to my students. Many of my students have never seen a theatrical production, much less to be able to write, and then perform, in one. My goals with these theatrical productions are to have my students learn theatrical elements while working in groups to write their own comedy. This interactive group work is then further enhanced as the students begin production of their play, achieving an experience unique to many of them. Besides group work, the writing and production of a play teaches the students how important audience is not only in writing, but also in speaking. Because of MPE, I had an added benefit in that my students also learned to work with professional sound equipment. It was truly a rich experience that my students and I will treasure for years.

Amber Combs
Franklin County Middle School-7th Grade, Counseling/Art Therapy
Implementing Art into Group Therapy
I would like to take this opportunity to thank MPE for providing the funding that enabled my students to participate in art therapy groups. From reading recent research, and from my own personal experiences as to the therapeutic nature of art, the idea to implement art therapy into the counseling curriculum was formed. With the help of this grant, I was able to effectively enhance the services provided to my students through the counseling curriculum. The art therapy sessions were designed to meet several objectives based on the Mississippi School Counseling Curriculum and the American School Counselor Association (ASCA). These objectives centered on student self-concept and self-expression through art, which positively affect mental health and well-being. They also learned to work cooperatively with others in a social setting and identified each other’s personal strengths and assets.

Castle Hudson
Batesville Intermediate School-3rd Grade Reading, Writing, Language Arts
Sound System to Succeed
Thank you MPE for funding my 2014-2015 classroom grant that gave my students a higher regard for their speaking and listening skills in the classroom. I used the funds to purchase a PA system for my students to use during presentations, read-alouds, projects, and many other activities. The portable wireless PA sound system was a great tool that engaged and motivated my students to support and empower each other through their speaking, listening, and presentation skills. Thanks to you, this new form of technology has supported, engaged, and motivated my students to master their speaking and listening standards!
Who
High school juniors
Assesses students’

High school seniors
Assesses students’

Statewide Assessments listed in the table below.

In our division, we provide three key services: (a) educator licensure, (b) statewide assessments, and (c) school/educator accountability. For this article, I will focus on the Office of Student Assessment (within the Division) in hopes to clarify several statewide assessments listed in the table below.

Table 1. Statewide Assessments for School Year (SY) 2015-16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What</th>
<th>Why</th>
<th>Who</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System (MKAS²)</td>
<td>Measures early literacy using three different assessments: (1) Universal Screener and Diagnostic Assessment, (2) Kindergarten Readiness Assessment, and (3) 3rd Grade Reading Summative Assessment</td>
<td>Pre-K &amp; Grade 3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Assessments Measuring the Content Standards</td>
<td>Measures what students know and are able to do in terms of Mississippi’s content standards in English language arts and math</td>
<td>Grades 3-8 and high school students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online Alternate Assessments in ELA and Mathematics</td>
<td>Measures select content standards that “bridge” from the content in the academic content standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (SCD).</td>
<td>Grade 3-12 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Science Test, 2nd Edition (MST2)</td>
<td>Measures student achievement in science based upon the 2010 Mississippi Science Framework</td>
<td>Grade 5 and 8 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mississippi Alternate Assessment for Extended Science Frameworks (MAAESF)</td>
<td>Measures the educational performance of students with disabilities who cannot participate in the general education curriculum, even with accommodations</td>
<td>Grades 5, 8 and 11/12 SCD students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American College Test (ACT)</td>
<td>Assesses students’ academic readiness for college</td>
<td>High school juniors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Language Proficiency Test (ELPT)</td>
<td>Measures the acquisition of academic English. Academic language is defined as the language required to succeed in school that includes deep understandings of content and communication of that language in the classroom environment.</td>
<td>K-12 E.L students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)</td>
<td>NAEP is a congressionally mandated project administered by the NCES, within the U.S. Department of Education.</td>
<td>Grade 4, 8, 12 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For our lower elementary grades, the state offers the Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System (MKAS²). This system incorporates three assessment types: (a) a universal screener, (b) a Kindergarten readiness assessment, and (c) a summative assessment. The purpose of the Universal Screener is to provide a “first look” at individual students, while the Diagnostic Assessments provide in-depth information about an individual student’s unique strengths and needs. The Kindergarten Readiness Assessment is designed to measure selected Kindergarten readiness skills that are aligned with Mississippi content standards. The 3rd Grade Reading Summative Assessment measures key reading standards in 3rd grade and is a requirement for promotion to the 4th grade. Students in elementary and middle school/junior high grades will take the newly developed criterion-referenced test this spring. These spring assessments are designed to measure Mississippi’s content standards in English language arts and mathematics. In addition, the state administers the Mississippi Science Test in grades 5 and 8. The progress of students with SCDs is measured through an assessment of the state’s alternate achievement standards in English language arts, mathematics, and science that are aligned with the Mississippi content standards. These alternate assessments are based upon select content standards that “bridge” from the content in the academic content standards to academic expectations for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities (SCD).

Finally, for our older students, the state will administer newly developed end-of-course (EoC) assessments in Algebra I, English II, Biology, and U.S History. These assessments measure the state’s content standards associated with the aforementioned courses. As with the earlier grades, alternate assessments for SCD students are also available. Another key assessment is the ACT assessment provided by ACT, Inc. This assessment provides key information about a student’s readiness for post-secondary education, such as traditional 2-year and 4-year colleges/universities.

I know many of you have concerns about administering three different state assessments in as many years. The agency, in collaboration with Mississippi teachers, has been working to finalize the blueprint for this year’s statewide assessments. I want to reassure you that the assessments will measure the standards that you have been teaching in your classrooms. The state superintendent made that a priority for this new assessment and we are committed to that goal.

As the school year continues this fall, our office will be working with the curriculum team here at MDE, our district partners, vendors, and academia to create helpful guides around teaching and learning. Our hope is to support the hard work you do every day in your classroom. Have a great year.

The MDE has secured temporary office space at four locations. MDE has assigned the majority of staff to office space in South Pointe Business Park, 500 Clinton Center Drive, Clinton. Departments assigned to alternate locations include:

- Special Education, Federal Programs, Conservatorship, and Safe and Orderly Schools: Mississippi School for the Blind (MSB), 1252 Eastover Drive, Jackson
- Healthy Schools: 500 Greymont Avenue, Jackson
- Accounting: Woolfolk Building Annex, 501 N. West Street, Jackson

Telephone numbers remain the same for all MDE offices.
My name is Anna Morris and I am extremely humbled to be named Mississippi’s Teacher of the Year for 2015. I would love to share with you about my research on project based learning, how I think the words “Maker’s Culture” are the two most important words in education today. I could share with you my passions, research, and joy— but none of that would be the reason I received this honor. I received this honor on the backs of the brilliant and patient educators at Lamar County School District and the fine professors at William Carey University who raised me from the beginning. I am where I am because teachers, co-workers, and professors mentored and invested in my practice even when I didn’t realize it.

Entering my eleventh year of teaching, I feel unspeakable joy for what I get to do every day. I don’t take this moment for granted, because I am keenly aware of all the mountaintops and valleys we face in this profession. I think about where I was when I started teaching, and how I let so many things diminish my joy as the years went by. I remember at the end of a particularly hard year thinking I had made a wrong decision entering into this field. But it was the love of my teaching partners and co-workers that reminded me that what we do every day is so much greater than what we can see in the moment. Hardships can make you bitter, but oh my friends, how it can make you brave. Often times, when we think of the impact of a teacher, we think of what they do for their STUDENTS. But did you ever stop to think what we do for ONE ANOTHER? My friends, it is you that inspire me. Seeing what you do in your classrooms, reading your lesson plans, hearing your triumphs and relating to your hardships— this is what taught me to teach. I am amazed and inspired by the brand new teachers entering this profession— their philosophies, and where they are with technology and data. If you want some of the best professional development available— sit next to a new teacher.

As for me, I learned to be an educator the day I learned to begin receiving feedback about my practice. I learned to be an educator the day I put down the glitter to become a researcher and advocate. For what it’s worth— I never lost the glitter, but that’s a different lesson— never lose the glitter! I learned to be an educator by seeing the wonderful strategies of my colleagues in my school and online and emulating those practices. What we do every day for one another is amazing. I look forward to representing Mississippi in the upcoming year and sharing in your educational journey. Thank you for what you do every day, not just in the lives of our youth, but in the lives of everyday teachers like me.

Hello Retired Educators,

I’ve watched another school year begin and I still have mixed emotions when this time comes. As soon as I see the school supplies go up in the stores I want to buy something. Then, I remember how hot it was when we went back and I smile because I will be home and cool!

If you have been retired awhile you can recertify for five years with a simple letter from PERS and an application. If you have been retired awhile you can recertify for half the price. But, if you are newly retired, please check and be sure you have informed. Please do continue as a member of MPE and let us keep you informed.

If you are newly retired, please contact our office. If you are going to be working part-time in any school setting, our $60 part-time membership is perfect, as you will continue with all the benefits but for half the price. But, if you are truly finished you can change to the lifetime retired membership for a one-time cost of $70. At this time over 90 members have chosen this. We also offer a one year retired membership for $10 but I can tell you the years pass fast and the lifetime is a bargain. Please do continue as a member of MPE and let us keep you informed.

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If you have been retired awhile you might want to check your certificate and see if it is expired or nearing expiration. As a retired educator you can recertify for five years with a simple letter from PERS and an application. Call me if you need help.

Please don’t hesitate to contact me if I can ever help you—or if you want to talk. My cell number is 662-588-9011 and my email is phileneallen@bellsouth.net. I’m here to represent YOU.
Initiative 42: Education Funding Initiative to be Decided in November

NOTE: While MPE does not endorse candidates or contribute to political campaigns, we strongly urge our members to be actively involved in the political process. The following is provided for informational purposes only.

Of the 50 states, Mississippi is the only state without a constitutional mandate for public education; rather, education funding is provided for in state law via the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) formula which was enacted in 1997. The formula establishes adequate operation funding levels necessary for each district to meet at least a “C” on the accountability scale of A-F regardless of that district’s location. The formula provides for teachers’ salaries, instructional materials, transportation and utilities/maintenance. The legislature has fully funded the formula twice, underfunding it by $1.7 billion since 2009.

Nearly 200,000 citizens signed petitions last fall to have a constitutional amendment (Initiative 42) placed on this November’s ballot to require that the State provide and the legislature fund an adequate and efficient system of free public schools. For the first time in Mississippi’s 22-year history of the initiative process, the legislature passed an alternative (42A) to the citizen-led initiative. Alternative Measure 42A requires that the legislature provide for the maintenance of an effective system of public schools.

Does Mississippi have the revenue to fully fund the MAEP formula?
Yes. State revenues have increased by almost 20% since 2011. Mississippi has had a budget surplus each of the last four years. The legislature has fully funded the state’s Working Cash Stabilization Fund (aka, the “Rainy Day Fund”), with that fund having a balance of $393 million this past July. Over the course of the last four years, the legislature has enacted corporate tax cuts totaling approximately $310 million. The MAEP formula for the 2014-2015 school year (FY 2015) was funded below the level appropriated for the 2007-2008 school year (FY 2008). The formula is underfunded by $201 million for the current 2015-2016 school year.

Doesn’t public education already receive 60% of the state budget?
No. Our state budget is comprised of several different sources of funds - state general funds, state special funds and federal funds. While public education – including K-12, community colleges and universities - receives approximately 55% of state general fund revenues, when considering the state budget in its entirety (i.e., state general, state special and federal funds), education receives approximately 17% of the revenue.

Will funding for higher education be cut if the MAEP if fully funded?
No. The petition process for Initiative 42 provided that full funding would be phased in by devoting 25% of future general fund revenue increases each year to public education to achieve the constitutionally required level by FY 2022 and then maintaining this funding level. Some legislative leaders have proposed fully funding the MAEP immediately if Initiative 42 is passed and have predicted that this would result in cuts of approximately 7.8% to IHL, community colleges and other state agencies. The legislature did not discuss such cuts when considering a $1.7 billion tax cut plan this past session.

Will a judge in Jackson determine funding for each school district if Initiative 42 passes?
No. The legislature will retain appropriation authority. If the legislature does not fully fund the formula and litigation is filed, Initiative 42 provides for such litigation to be filed in chancery court so as to provide for injunctive relief (i.e., no monetary damages). Initiative 42A allows for litigation to be filed in either circuit court where monetary damages could be awarded or chancery court for injunctive relief. State law requires any lawsuit filed against the state to be filed in Hinds County, the seat of state government. Any litigation may be appealed to the Mississippi Supreme Court.

Are you receiving weekly emails from our Executive Director?
Keep up-to-date with the latest MPE news, education and legislative updates, scholarships, regional trainings and classroom grant opportunities.
email kelly@mpe.org to add your email to our distribution list
I am convinced that the best way to continue to move education forward in Mississippi is to do our best to ensure that we have high-quality teachers in every classroom and provide them with the support they need. The value of effective teachers in our schools is immeasurable.

The Mississippi Department of Education strives to provide professional development opportunities that will grow your knowledge and skills, whether that's literacy training or training on unpacking the college- and career-ready standards. The MDE is a service organization, and as such, it is our desire to be a resource for teachers who desire to become leaders in their schools. It is essential that we have professional development opportunities to improve school instructional leadership and professional development for our building leaders. It is essential that we have a teachers’ group that will help us shape our work at the agency and to be true thought partners as we work together to guide students on their paths to success.

Our educational system cannot succeed without you. As a former teacher and principal, I truly value your commitment to a noble profession that doesn’t always get the recognition it deserves nor the pay that it merits. That’s why I want to offer this opportunity for the teacher leaders around this state to use their voices to better our educational system.

Over the last year, I have met monthly with a Superintendents’ Advisory Council and the insights, advice, and concerns have been invaluable to me as I approach my second year with the MDE. Dr. Kim Benton, MDE chief academic officer, is in the process of forming a Principals’ Advisory Council that will discuss ways to improve school instructional leadership and professional development for our building leaders. It is essential that we have a teachers’ group that will help us shape our work at the agency and to be true thought partners as we work together to guide students on their paths to success.

The results highlighted in the 2015 KIDS Count Data Book are not surprising, especially to those of us who are educators, but still sobering:

- The rate of child poverty for 2013 ranged from a low of 10 percent in New Hampshire to a high of 34 percent in Mississippi.
- State differences in fourth-grade reading levels among public school students were wide. In 2013, Massachusetts had the lowest percentage of public school fourth graders not proficient in reading, 53 percent, compared with a high of 79 percent in Mississippi and New Mexico.
- Only 1 percent of children in Vermont lived in areas of concentrated poverty, while 27 percent of Mississippi’s children lived in high-poverty areas.
- College graduates are more likely to read to their children. They are more likely to be economically secure and able to provide for their families. They are more likely to volunteer, vote and raise healthier and better-educated children. Having more adults who hold a college degree in Mississippi will improve Mississippi’s economy and provide more resources for important services, including education.

As educators, we have crucial roles to play every step of the way. As the statistics above clearly indicate, our role is more important in Mississippi than in other states. Each day we enter a classroom, regardless of the grade level or setting, we must give our best effort so that each child can succeed at each step of the journey. Their future and the future of our state depend on us.

Universities have a multi-layered role to play. We prepare the teachers to enter Mississippi classrooms on all levels. We conduct research on all facets of children’s lives and well-being. With each student we graduate, we are improving the lives of Mississippi’s children, many of whom are yet to be born. The report found that “Parents’ education level influences a wide range of factors that impact children, from family income and the likelihood of growing up in poverty to the child’s own educational attainment.”

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As you prepare for the start of a new school year, I hope you will remember what a tremendous difference you make as advocates for our children and the future of our state.
On July 1, I began serving as Interim Executive Director of the Mississippi Community College Board, and it has been one of the highlights of my professional career. Having been with the agency since 1988, I understand the unique and important roles that our community college system plays in Mississippi and am grateful to be in this position to help lead our institutions.

Also on July 1, there were several other changes at our agency and at our community colleges.

Mr. Lee Bush from Jackson and Mr. John Pigott from Picayune began serving one-year terms as chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the Mississippi Community College Board. Mr. Bush replaced Mr. Bruce Martin from Meridian as chair and Mr. Pigott replaced Mr. Tom Gresham for their leadership during the past year and look forward to working with Mr. Bush and Mr. Pigott in their new roles.

Also, Mr. Johnny McRight from Greenville began a six-year term on our board, representing the Second Congressional District. Mr. McRight replaces Mr. Tom Gresham, who was appointed to the Mississippi Gaming Commission by Governor Bryant. Since 1976, Mr. McRight has owned and operated McRight Services, an agriculture consulting company. He brings a strong background in workforce training to our board, having previously served as Vice-Chairman of the Washington County Economic Alliance and is currently a member of the Delta Workforce Investment Board.

Dr. Rick Young, president at East Mississippi Community College, and Dr. Johnny Allen, president at Northeast Mississippi Community College, both retired on July 1. Dr. Thomas Huebner is the new president at East Mississippi and Mr. Ricky Ford is the new president at Northeast. Dr. Huebner came to East Mississippi from Shelton State Community College in Tuscaloosa where he most recently served as Dean of Student Services. Mr. Ford is an alumnus of Northeast and has been with the college since 1981, most recently serving as Executive Vice President.

Finally, Dr. Jesse Smith, president at Jones County Junior College and Dr. Ronnie Nettles, president at Copiah-Lincoln Community College, began serving two-year terms as chair and vice-chair of the Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges, which is the community college presidents’ organization.

As you can see, there have been a lot of changes within our community college system and I know each of these people will do an outstanding job in leading our agency and our institutions.

As I write this, the summer temperatures are in full force; however, the good news is that the cooler fall weather is right around the corner. This changing of the seasons also means our classrooms will soon be full of eager students and the school year will be in full swing.

Thank you for everything that each of you does to help our students. You have one of the most challenging, important, and rewarding jobs in educating Mississippians and bettering our state!
MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

BEST PRACTICES SYMPOSIUM

2016

“How to Be a Successful and Effective Teacher”

Saturday, April 9, 2016

The Hilton
Jackson, MS

* BREAK-OUT SESSIONS WITH ENGAGING SPEAKERS
* THE LATEST INFORMATION ON THE BUDGET, LEGISLATION AND MUCH MORE
* CEUS WILL BE AVAILABLE
* GREAT DOOR PRIZES!

We hope to see you there!

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MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS

BEST PRACTICES SYMPOSIUM

Dr. Harry Wong, classroom teacher and author of the bestselling book in education worldwide, *The First Days of School*, will be our keynote speaker. Dr. Wong will be joined by his wife Rosemary. They are the authors of a new book, *The Classroom Management Book*. Harry is the recipient of the Horace Mann Outstanding Educator Award and the only recipient of the Lifetime Achievement Recognition from the National Teachers Hall of Fame. Harry and Rosemary are recognized leaders in the development of effective teachers.

For more information or to register, contact Barbie Ferguson at barbie@mpe.org or (800)523-0269.

DATA DRIVEN INSTRUCTION: This session will be a hands-on collaborative training geared toward ensuring participants learn how to use valid data to drive instruction in their classrooms. Real-world examples of data-driven instruction in kindergarten through twelfth grades will be explored. Participants will complete sample activities, utilizing both formative and summative data, and develop a plan to incorporate data driven instruction in their classrooms.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept. 15</td>
<td>Delta State University, Cleveland</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 1</td>
<td>Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo Public Schools, Tupelo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 27</td>
<td>Lake Terrace Convention Center, Hattiesburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>Nov. 19</td>
<td>Hinds Community College Muse Center, Pearl</td>
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IMPLEMENTING MISSISSIPPI’S COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS- ELA: This training will discuss keys to successful implementation of MCCR standards and discuss the language of the standards. It will give participants a portrait of a successful MCCR student, as well as encourage participants to rethink classroom instruction with examples of appropriate and effective tasks. Participants will also write assessment items at the appropriate level of rigor required of the MCCR standards.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Sept. 30</td>
<td>MSU Riley Center, Meridian</td>
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<td>Dec. 1</td>
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<td>Feb. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct. 19</td>
<td>University of Mississippi Insight Park, Oxford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb. 16</td>
<td>Southwest Community College Workforce Learning Center, Summit</td>
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IMPLEMENTING MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS – MATH: Topics will include: modeling the standards and their importance, collaborating through number talks, effectively using Mississippi scaffolding documents, collecting and using relevant data, modeling mathematical practices, and implementing assessment shifts. The training will focus on ensuring mathematical rigor for every grade, as well as introducing educational apps for the math classroom.

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<td>Feb. 12</td>
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<td>Oct. 16</td>
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<td>Dec. 4</td>
<td>William Carey University - Tradition Campus, Biloxi</td>
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<td>Dec. 11</td>
<td>Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo Public Schools, Tupelo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan. 7</td>
<td>Life Church, Laurel</td>
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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 2015-2016 school year.

For more information or to register, contact Barbie Ferguson at barbie@mpe.org or (800)523-0269.
Why MPE?

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2015 - 2016 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>$482* - $516*</td>
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<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>Lifetime Retiree without insurance</td>
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<td>$162* - $272*</td>
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<td>Student Teacher with insurance</td>
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<td>$25</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired Educator without insurance</td>
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<td>$15 - $65*</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
- Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarships awarded annually
- Classroom Grant opportunities
- Free Regional Trainings
- NBCT Recertification Scholarships
- 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.