Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System

Classroom/School Site Observation

Follow-up and Additional Feedback

Clear, Specific, Actionable, and Timely Feedback

Changes in Practice
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MPE Journal

Executive Director
Kelly Riley

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How exciting is the beginning of each school year! By now you have welcomed new faces, become reacquainted with former ones, and may even be in a new position. Are all of those fresh ideas from trainings, webinars, conventions, summer courses, or educational sites still swirling in your heads or are they being tried out for the first time? After another extensive round of Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training for Institutes of Higher Learning faculty and attending the International Literacy Convention (ILA) in Boston, I have replenished my treasury for literacy instruction. After all, you never stop learning, do you?

Literacy instruction, the ability to read and write or the competence in a subject, is an area that just keeps on giving! My first realization that everyone did not know how to read or write came at an early age while working at a small country store owned by my family. Some customers signed the charge pad with an “X.” Reflecting on this experience later in life, I realized that some people were not afforded the same opportunities to go to school as others. Sometimes, it was a matter of earning a living or getting an education. I knew many of these people personally and, although they may not have had reading or writing skills, they had excellent life skills. Perhaps this experience sparked my interest in becoming a teacher. Teaching literacy has been the thread that’s intertwined with every subject I’ve taught.

Most educators associate literacy instruction with lower elementary grades. Oral language, phonology, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension are the very foundations of teaching reading. Writing basics build on syntax, semantics, syllabication, spelling, word study, and purpose. Literacy does not stop in lower or intermediate grades. Literacy applies to every subject in every grade. Even in subject areas, once students understand academic words, they are better equipped to identify more complex ideas and apply critical thinking skills. In fact, although some skills may be mastered at certain levels, the reciprocal processes of reading and writing are actually never-ending. Once you’ve read what you consider a good book, is there not a better book out there somewhere? Writers can always expand their repertoire. Our task, as educators, is to steer students to the next level.

Students are benefiting from our state’s push for literacy instruction! In case you haven’t heard, since the implementation of our state standards in 2011, fourth graders’ reading proficiency increased from 21% to 26% on NAEP’s 2015 report card. After passing The Literacy Based Promotion Act (2013), 92% of third-graders passed the state’s reading exam in 2015. Mississippi received the 2016 Frank Newman Award for State Innovation for prioritizing early learning reading skills. “The dedication we are seeing in Mississippi to improve outcomes for students of all ages is quite impressive and is absolutely paying off,” said Education Commission of the States President Jeremy Anderson.

You are a valuable playmaker in the ever-changing process of educating our children! Keep filling those coffers with innovative ideas!
Kelly Riley

“Life stands before me like an eternal spring with new and brilliant clothes.”
-- Carl Friedrich Gauss, German mathematician

During my family’s vacation this summer, I went down to the beach to watch the sunrise. While the sky was beautiful, I found myself watching the tide ebb in and out. As the beach was nearly vacant, there were no footprints on the sand. The tide left a smooth, shiny sheen on the sand each time it retreated. While it initially reminded me of the fresh start to the upcoming day, my thoughts soon turned to the start of this new school year. This is always an exciting time for educators and students throughout our state. New classes, new friends, new challenges, new adventures in learning… the opportunities are endless. I hope you carry this sense of opportunity with you throughout this entire school year.

MPE will continue to offer opportunities for professional growth to our members:

- Regional trainings: See page 16 for details regarding our regional trainings throughout the state. These FREE trainings for MPE members offer CEUs. This year’s topics include technology, art education, using data to drive instruction, autism and dyslexia, and gifted education.
- Graduate scholarships: Our 2017 graduate scholarship application will be posted in the “Quick Links” section of our website (www.mpe.org) in November, with applications due the end of February. We will award 20 grants this year—up from 10 last year—in the amount of $1,000 each!
- 2017 Best Practices Symposium: Mark your calendar for April 8, 2017, to join us at symposium. See page 23 for information on the day’s speakers and events!

This issue spotlights Mississippi's Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System. This system is built upon revisions to our state’s prior M-STAR rubric, as well as the development of an administrator rubric. Please read the article on page 12 for additional info.

State Superintendent Dr. Carey Wright formed several task forces over the course of the summer. The Educator Misconduct Task Force is reviewing Mississippi’s Code of Ethics and Standards of Conduct, as well as the statutes and policies that govern teacher licensing procedures. Any recommendations are scheduled to be made to the State Board of Education by October. I am serving on this task force and will keep you updated via my weekly emails as to its work. I am also serving on MDE’s Teacher Leadership Task Force, which is identifying ways to engage teachers statewide to take an active role in the leadership of their schools. You’ll be hearing more about this exciting new opportunity for Mississippi educators.

My weekly emails – which go out each Friday morning – are a great way for you to stay informed as to the latest MPE news, education and legislative updates, and other opportunities. If you are not receiving my emails, please contact our office (800-523-0269) or email me (kelly@mpe.org) to make sure we have your current email address on file.

If you have not already seen it, I hope you will take a few minutes to view our new recruitment video. It is available on our website (www.mpe.org) and our Facebook page, as well as on YouTube. It features testimonials from six members regarding the benefits of belonging to MPE.

Mississippi educators—at the pre-K, K-12, community college, and university level—touch the future each day in their classrooms. MPE is here to support you and other educators in this incredible journey. Best wishes for an outstanding year!
According to an online article I read recently, “classroom organization should be a back to school priority for every teacher. It’s about creating an environment that includes systems and structures that ensure classroom efficiency.” If you are anything like me, you spend a great deal of time each day digging through one stack or another looking for something you know is beneath the cluttered pile you once referred to as your desk! A few years ago, I became determined to implement some organizational strategies and get the clutter under control.

My first suggestion is this: visit garage sales, thrift stores or salvage stores often, and when you see a bucket, binder or bin of any shape, size or description, BUY IT! You may not know at the time what it will be used for, but when you’re ready to get organized, you’ll want to have a variety of containers at your disposal. Don’t let the color or appearance sway you because the item doesn’t match your classroom theme; spray paint, decorative tape or scrapbook paper can breathe life into the most mundane objects.

Now, for item number one: buckets. Decorate and label a small bucket for missing parts. When a student finds a glue top, marker lid, or puzzle piece, they’ll know where to put it. When a student needs a glue top, marker lid, or puzzle piece, they’ll know where to find it. Fill a small bucket with highlighters, and put it where students will turn in work. Instruct them to highlight their name and other important headers before they turn in work, and voila! No more wasted time trying to determine who forgot to write their name.

Item number two: binders. Prepare a binder at the beginning of the year that coordinates with your classroom theme, and add a title such as “Happy Notes for My Teacher.” When a student brings you a note or picture they have lovingly crafted for you, ask them to place it in the binder. Keep the binder in a prominent location in the room so students can look through it during free time. There are two benefits to this: they will know their gifts are among your most treasured possessions, AND the notes won’t clutter your work area. A binder is also a godsend for new student packets. Inside it, keep extras of everything you prepare at the beginning of the school year. When a new student arrives mid-year (typically at the most inopportune time), you’ll have a name tag, label for their cubby/backpack hook, folder/journal, beginning-of-the-year parent information, etc., all in one place at your fingertips.

And lastly: bins. In addition to a “Turn-it-in-bin” for completed work, create a bin where students can place work they haven’t completed. Label it “Still Working” or “Incomplete.” This will prevent students from cramming their unfinished work into their desk or cubby, never to be seen again. Prepare bins for yourself (or your paraprofessional if you are fortunate enough to have one) labeled “Grade,” “Copy,” and “File.” Make it a goal to deal with the papers in each bin before you leave at the end of the day to keep things from piling up.

This is only the tip of the iceberg, but hopefully some of these suggestions will prove to be beneficial for you. By organizing a few buckets, binders, and bins, you’re on your way to the clutter-free classroom you have always dreamed of!
The MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 22-24 in Hernando. The board hosted a reception for local legislators and educational leaders on Wednesday evening.

Board members were honored to be joined by several legislators from the area, including Representatives Dana Criswell, Dan Eubanks, Robert Foster, Ashley Henley, and Steve Hopkins, as well as Senator Bill Stone. Other guests included Julie Correro, Division Director of Education at Northwest Mississippi Community College; Dr. Ishmell Edwards, Rust College’s Vice President for College Relations; Dr. Barbara McMillan, President of Blue Mountain College; and, Cory Uselton, Superintendent of DeSoto County Schools. Several past directors and current MPE building reps from the area also attended.

During Thursday’s planning meeting, directors reviewed MPE’s 2015-2016 program highlights, including legal assistance services provided to our members. They also selected facilitators for MPE’s 2016-2017 regional trainings and planned for the 2017 Best Practices Symposium, which will be held on April 8, 2017. That afternoon, several directors enjoyed a tour of Graceland. The board held its quarterly meeting on Friday.

As always, MPE appreciates our directors’ continued commitment and service to our association.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MIZE HONORED AS HISTORY TEACHER OF THE YEAR

Bruce Mize of West Point High School has been named the 2016 History Teacher of the Year for the State of Mississippi through the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History. In addition to his $1,000 award, an archive of books and historical resources will be presented in Mize’s name to his school library. West Point High School will be named a Gilder Lehrman Affiliate School and will receive invitations to regional forums with noted historians, as well as access to extensive teacher resources. A member of MPE since 2000, Mize is one of fifty-three finalists for the $10,000 National History Teacher of the Year Award, which will be announced this fall.

DSU STUDENT CHAPTER ART SUPPLY DRIVE

The Mississippi Professional Educators Student Chapter at Delta State University coordinated an art supply drive this past spring semester as its biannual service project. The student members placed boxes around the campus of DSU to collect various art supplies from faculty, staff, and students. They also collected monetary donations to purchase any needed art supplies that were not donated. The student members took the donations to Bell Academy, in Boyle, MS, and conducted a shared book experience and art project with the first grade classes. The remaining art supplies were donated to the first grade teachers. It was a very fun and rewarding experience for both the student members and the first grade children!

WILLIAMSON EARNED EDUCATION SPECIALIST DEGREE

Lisa Williamson, principal at South Pontotoc Elementary School, has earned an Education Specialist degree in Instructional Leadership from William Carey University. The program is one of the online degrees offered through the School of Education at WCU. The program is fourteen months of continuous online coursework. A member of MPE since 1990, Williamson serves as the District 1 Director on the MPE Board of Directors. She has also been selected for the Mississippi School Board Association’s 2016-2017 Prospective Superintendent Leadership Academy.

FULLER SELECTED AS FULBRIGHT DISTINGUISHED TEACHER

Lynn Fuller, an ELL teacher for the Madison County Schools, was recently selected as a Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching grant recipient. She will live this fall in the Palestinian Territories to research using oral history to aid second language writing. Fuller is one of approximately forty-five U.S. citizens who will travel abroad through the Fulbright Distinguished Awards in Teaching Program in 2016-2017. Recipients of Fulbright grants are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, as well as demonstrated leadership potential. The Fulbright Program is the flagship international educational exchange program sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. Fuller has been a member of MPE since 2008.
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

You work hard for your students. We work hard for you.

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

**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 membership + $10 per member*
- 10-14 new members = one year’s membership + $15 per member*
- 15+ new members = one year’s 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, 2016, and June 30, 2017. Free memberships will be credited towards the next year’s membership.

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

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

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2015-2016 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 2015-2016 school year, with sixteen members receiving grants of up to $500 for their class projects and instructional program. As of the 2016-2017 school year, classroom grant funding has increased to $1,000. The recipients for this year have already been selected and will be featured in future editions. We are pleased to spotlight several of the grants below for your enjoyment, as well as your reference for ideas for your own classroom.

April Dill
Millsaps Career and Tech Center- 9th Grade Engineering
Yellowjacket Delivery

My students and I would like to thank MPE for funding my project “Yellowjacket Delivery.” With the $500 grant, I purchased six Discovery Drones, which have allowed my 9th grade Introduction to Engineering students to implement hands-on learning through the incorporation of teamwork, creativity, problem solving, engineering design, and CAD skills, all while learning about this emerging technology and its current and future uses. In addition to drone research, students have also had fun learning to fly the drones in several outside learning activities. At this time, students are learning CAD skills, which will be incorporated into the design of a carrier for the drones to simulate Amazon and their future shipping technology. Students will compete in teams to design the most effective and efficient carrier to deliver their “product” intact and on time. These drones have become a huge motivating factor in my engineering classroom and we appreciate the funding that would not have been possible without the MPE classroom grant.

Andrea Jones
Gary Road Intermediate- 3rd Grade Reading
Leveled Literary Intervention

Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided the students of Gary Road Intermediate School the opportunity to have additional supplies that were not a part of the initial LLI (Leveled Literacy Intervention) kit that our school district implemented. My main goal for writing this grant was to ensure that the students had the much-needed resources that would allow them to express their thoughts and knowledge of the books they read through journal writing, as well as access to additional test prep books. This grant blessed more than 60 students. These resources, in collaboration with other reading tools, will ensure that the 3rd grade students of our school pass the MKAS assessment.
Christie Lowery  
Davidson Elementary - 2nd Grade Science/Social Studies  
_Scholastic News_  
I would like to thank the MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided _Scholastic News_ magazines to all of our second graders. This grant motivated our students very positively. This grant provided each of our second grade students with thirty-two different issues of science and social studies articles and activities. Some of our favorites were Dr. Seuss, Agent 77, and Ice Volcanoes! The students’ attention was easily captured by the colorful photos and on-level topics. Each student also had access to the _Scholastic News_ website as well as an Ipad app featuring video games and learning games. Our students were eager to share the archived magazines online with their families at home.

Marie Davis  
Poplarville Middle School - 7th-8th Grade Language Arts  
_Maker Spaces: Innovation in High School_  
I would like to thank MPE for funding the classroom grant that made my 2015-16 school year a success. It helped improve my students’ reading fluency, comprehension, vocabulary development, behavior, and increased their confidence. The grant also relieved me of the stress of making games for students to play. By engaging the students in learning experiences in centers, I was able to work one on one with students. It also proved technology is not the only means to keep students engaged. The games covered many components of reading comprehension. I encourage all teachers to apply for these grants.

Lenette Stinson  
Petal Elementary - 4th Grade English Language Arts  
_Text Talkers_  
Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided 100 books for our classroom library. One of the goals of the project was to have diverse genres in the classroom with two copies of each book. By using the paired books library, students read independently at home and discussed their books in class during our Text Talkers’ allotted time. By providing purposeful reading, students were motivated to read and share what they had read. Without prompting, students even contacted each other after school to read and discuss excerpts from their books. Interest levels increased in students, and they began researching additional information on the topics. Through the funds of this grant, my students spent more time reading independently which provided essential skill reinforcement and a lifelong love of reading.
Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System

The Mississippi Educator and Administrator Professional Growth System is designed to improve teaching and learning by providing teachers and administrators with feedback to inform continuous improvement. A well-designed and well-implemented educator effectiveness system will provide critical information to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), local districts, and schools to inform professional learning and improve student outcomes.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) gives autonomy to states in deciding how teacher and administrator evaluations should be implemented. In response to this flexibility, the MDE assembled a group of diverse stakeholders, the Educator and Leader Effectiveness Steering Committee, to systematically review and recommend improvements to the Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric (M-STAR), and the Mississippi Principal Evaluation System (MPES). The steering committee, comprised of teachers, school and district leaders, and other stakeholders, recommended changes to the teacher rubric and developed an administrator rubric.

Teacher Observation Cycle

The observation process includes a cycle of classroom observations, feedback, adjustments in practice, and follow up to support the growth of teachers. The observation cycle will ensure that teachers receive regular observations to provide accurate and meaningful feedback. Each observation should be followed by clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback to improve practice. The MDE recommends observers and supervisors follow up to ensure feedback is incorporated and to provide additional assistance, if necessary.

At a minimum, three classroom observations should be completed each school year: two informal/walk-throughs (unannounced) and one formal (announced). Districts have flexibility in determining the number of classroom observations beyond the minimum. Pre-observation conferences are optional, but clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback should be provided after each observation during a post-observation conference. The length of the observations and post-observation conferences are at the discretion of the district.

Teacher Growth Rubric

The M-STAR was revised, reducing the number of domains and standards. The three goals of the revisions are to raise the bar, reduce the lift, and support the growth of teachers. The revised M-STAR, called the Teacher Growth Rubric, contains four domains and nine standards as compared to the previous five domains and twenty standards.

Raising the Bar: The rubric revisions are designed to make the instrument more effective in helping teachers and administrators identify high-quality instructional practices. The updated rubric includes advanced instructional practices at performance level four designed to give students ownership of learning.

Reducing the Lift: The revised rubric includes proven teaching practices while reducing overlap. Fewer standards ensure teachers focus on the practices that matter most to increase student achievement.

Supporting the Growth of Teachers: The rubric and classroom observation cycle are designed to support teacher growth through clear, specific, actionable, and timely feedback. The rubric provides teachers and administrators with a common language to discuss instructional practice.
Domains and Standards

Domain I: Lesson Design
1. Lessons are aligned to standards and represent a coherent sequence of learning
2. Lessons have high levels of learning for all students

Domain II: Student Understanding
3. Assists students in taking responsibility for learning and monitors student learning
4. Provides multiple ways for students to make meaning of content

Domain III: Culture and Learning Environment
5. Manages a learning-focused classroom community
6. Manages classroom space, time, and resources (including technology when appropriate) effectively for student learning
7. Creates and maintains a classroom of respect for all students

Domain IV: Professional Responsibilities
8. Engages in professional learning
9. Establishes and maintains effective communication with families/guardians

Administrator Observation Cycle
Administrators’ supervisors should gather evidence of practice through a minimum of three school site observations per school year. The number of school site observations beyond the minimum is at the discretion of the school district. The visits allow supervisors to observe administrators in action. Periodic, purposeful school site observations provide critical opportunities for supervisors to observe, collect evidence, and analyze the work of principals to facilitate ongoing feedback, dialogue about principal practice, and continuous improvement. The MDE recommends one school site observation before or at the beginning of the school year. Clear, specific, timely, and actionable feedback should be provided after each school site observation. The length of the school site observations and feedback conferences are at the discretion of the school district.

Administrator Growth Rubric
The administrator rubric was adapted from New Leaders, a nonprofit organization that prepares school leaders. Each practice was validated in a study of highly effective leaders and identified as the most common practices used by school leaders with outstanding student results. The rubric was modified by a team of administrators and superintendents from around the state. The adapted instrument is streamlined to make it more manageable. The Administrator Growth Rubric contains five domains and nineteen standards.

Domains and Standards

Domain I: Shared Vision, School Culture, and Family Engagement
1. Implements a shared vision
2. Maintains a supportive, secure, and respectful learning environment
3. Engages in courageous conversations about diversity
4. Welcomes families and community members into the school

Domain II: Teaching and Learning
5. Supports the development and implementation of Mississippi standards-based lessons and unit plans
6. Implements effective instructional strategies to meet student learning needs
7. Tracks student-level data to drive continuous improvement
8. Uses disaggregated data to inform academic intervention

Domain III: Staff Development
9. Provides actionable feedback
10. Coaches and implements learning structures
11. Provides leadership opportunities
12. Develops a highly effective leadership team

Domain IV: Strategic Planning and Systems
13. Develops and implements strategic plans
14. Monitors progress toward goals
15. Effectively manages professional time
16. Aligns and manages the school’s resources

Domain V: Personal Leadership and Growth
17. Demonstrates self-awareness, reflection, and ongoing learning
18. Demonstrates resilience in the face of challenge
19. Communicates with stakeholders Administrator Observation Cycle

Resources
For resources, including rubrics and training opportunities, please visit www.mde.k12.ms.us/OTC/professional-growth-system or email profgrowth@mdek12.org. The Teacher Growth Rubric is also available via the “Quick Links” menu on the MPE homepage (www.mpe.org).
STAR Teachers

This past spring, the Mississippi Economic Council recognized 283 STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition) Teachers from around our state. MPE congratulates the following 66 members for being among the 283 honored:

Mary Beth Black, Amory High School
Wendy Cawthorn, Bogue Chitto School
Brad DeVaughn, Booneville High School
Emily Bethea, Brandon High School
Jeffrey Hill, Byhalia High School
Teresa Whitaker, Calhoun City High School
Elizabeth Wilson, Carroll Academy
Doralyn Killebrew, Central Holmes Christian School
Jamie Franklin, Choctaw Central High School
Susan Stewart, Christian Collegiate Academy
Jennifer Gaston, Coffeeville High School
Dal Murray, Columbia High School
Vicki Shirley, Corinth High School
Kristal Sisson, East Central High School
Bronwyn Tullos, East Rankin Academy
Kathy McKone, Enterprise Attendance Center
Corey Parish, Ethel High School
Charles Johnson, Forrest County AHS
Mandy Scarpulla, Franklin High School
Jennifer Mathis, George County High School
Shawna Robinson, Hamilton High School
Latrice Smith, Heidelberg Academy
Angela Terrell, Heidelberg High School
Melinda Kopp, Houlka High School
Jennifer Nance, Ingomar High School
Shenicki Cook-Lee, Jefferson County High School
Daisy Bullard, Lafayette High School
Joshua Walters, Laurel High School
Craig Davis, Lawrence County High School
Deborah Shive, Lee Academy
Tracey Hunter, Lewisburg High School
Jan DeLaughter, Loyd Star High School
Rebecca Temple, Madison Central HS +
Michelle Robinson, Madison Central HS
Lilly Gona, McComb High School
Pamela McCraw, Mize High School
David Slade, Mt. Olive High School
Julie McCullough, Myrtle High School
Marc McCool, Nanih Waiya HS
Thomas Richardson, New Hope HS
Chad Bond, Newton County HS
Deedra Bales, North Pike High School
Alison Clark, Northeast Jones HS
Mandy Herrington, Park Place Academy
Barbara Worrell, Pearl High School
Pamela Farr, Pearl River Central HS
Lela Draughn, Perry Central HS
James Bullard, Petal High School
Sarah Rodgers, Pine Grove High School
Ashley Johnson, Presbyterian HS
Elizabeth Knight, Richland High School
SuzAnne Thoms, Richton High School
Eleanor Phillips, Saint Aloysius HS
Gina Stovall, Salem High School
Ginger Reynolds, Saltillo High School
Amy McWilliams, Simpson Academy
Leslie Gammill, South Panola HS
Sharon Schaefer, South Pontotoc HS
Benita Madden, Southeast Lauderdale
James Bowman, Stone High School
Shannon Fortinberry, Tyldertown HS
Thomas Slade, Vancleave High School
Anamaria Moore, Vardaman HS
Karen Deniakos, West Jones HS
Jay Mills, West Marion High School
Raquel Morris, West Union High School

+ Selected as STAR Teacher by two separate students.

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the Kelly Gene Cook, Sr., Charitable Foundation, Inc., scholarships for STAR Students and awards for STAR Teachers in Mississippi. Over $1.3 million in scholarships has been awarded to STAR students during this time. The STAR school with the highest number of STAR Students receives the Peggy Howard Award of Distinction. Madison Central High School was recognized this year with five STAR Students.
Hello, Retirees (and Wannabees),

As a new school year began, did you find yourself strolling down the back-to-school aisles in the stores? For those new retirees—that is ok, we all do it. Be sure and let the MPE office know if you have retired, as your membership status needs to be changed. If you are continuing to work some, our part-time with insurance for $60 a year is perfect for you. If you are truly retired, the Lifetime Retiree membership at $70 is quite a bargain and a thank you gift the board approved a couple of years ago. You can still choose the yearly retired membership for $10 but I can tell you from experience that the years go by fast and it is easy to forget to renew!

MPE will be sending out emails concerning any legislative issues that concern us as retirees. Be sure to update your email address if it changed with retirement.

Barbie Ferguson, our Deputy Director, represented us at the annual meeting of MRPEA (MS Retired Public Employees Association). We cooperate with them to keep informed of legislative issues that could affect us as retirees and future retirees.

We recently honored 18 members who retired with 20 or more years of membership in MPE with a $50 donation to the school program of their choice. We appreciate you and your years with MPE!

If I can ever be of any assistance, please be sure to contact me at 662-588-9011, or phileneallen@bellsouth.net

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**WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!**

MPE is proud to recognize our members’ achievements. Please send us your MPE news so that we may share it with our membership in upcoming editions of the *MPE Journal* or our weekly emails.

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**WHITE NAMED INTERIM SUPERINTENDENT**

Deatrice White has been named Interim Superintendent of the Coffeeville School District. An experienced administrator from within the district, she previously served as both Director of Federal Programs, as well as Assistant Superintendent. White has been a member of MPE since 2011.

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**FABBRI EARS MASTER IN EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP**

Joan Fabbri recently earned her Master of Education in Educational Leadership from Mississippi College. She would like to acknowledge the support of her professor Dr. Brit Dickens, as well as that of her mentor, Dr. Jessica Broome. Fabbri is a content area English teacher in the SPED Department at Pearl High School. A member of MPE since 1999, she has served on the MPE Board and as an MPE Area Director. She served as MPE’s Building Rep at Brandon High School for numerous years.

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**RETIREE REFLECTIONS**

Philene Allen
MPE Board of Directors, Retirees
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 2016-2017 school year.

INFUSING TECHNOLOGY INTO DAILY INSTRUCTIONAL STRATEGIES: This session will be a hands-on session that is limited to the first 20 participants. Participants will be able to utilize such resources as Snag-It, Adobe Spark, Screencastify, Camtasia, Poll Everywhere, FlipQuiz, Today’s Meet, and various Google apps. Instructors will focus on using technology to gain immediate feedback for measuring student growth.

INFUSING TECHNOLOGY SECONDARY TRAINING
* Oct. 3  Delta State University, Cleveland
* Dec. 8  Copiah Lincoln Community College, Wesson

INFUSING TECHNOLOGY ELEMENTARY TRAINING
* Nov. 2  Jones Junior College, Ellisville

ART EDUCATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: This training develops the key elements of arts integration: the “big idea,” real world content, standards-based instruction, and authentic assessment. Participants will explore the what, how, and when; they will then examine lesson exemplars and apply their learning in order to plan arts integration for an upcoming unit of study.

• Oct. 18  Holmes Community College, Kosciusko
• Nov. 7  Insight Park, Oxford
• Dec. 6  Hilton Garden Inn, Hattiesburg

USING DATA TO DRIVE 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. Participants will complete assessment activities, utilizing both formative and summative data, and develop a plan to incorporate data-driven instruction in their classrooms.

• Oct. 12  Holmes Community College, Grenada
• Dec. 5  Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl
• Feb. 10  Hilton Garden Inn, Starkville

HOT TOPICS IN AUTISM AND DYSLEXIA: This session will be divided between Autism Spectrum Disorder topics in the morning and Dyslexia topics in the afternoon. Each presenter will focus on current trends, issues and best practices in the fields of autism spectrum disorders (ASD), dyslexia, and related disabilities. Participants will be exposed to a course of study that will help them better understand each disability, as well as dispel the most common myths. The training format will include lecture, videos, and group discussion.

• Oct. 20  Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo
• Nov. 16  William Carey Tradition Campus, Biloxi
• Jan. 11  Greenville Higher Ed Center, Greenville
• Jan. 31  Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl

GIFTED EDUCATION BEST PRACTICES: Using hands-on activities, this session will incorporate best practices in all content areas of the curriculum. Participants will understand the needs, characteristics, and various talents of students who have a gifted ruling. Participants will complete projects to use in their classrooms, as well as discover additional classroom funding sources.

• Dec. 1    Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo
• Jan. 19   Life Church, Laurel
• Feb. 7    The Natchez Grand Hotel, Natchez

To register, go to www.mpe.org, click on the “Professional Development” tab, and then click on the hyperlink for the respective training you wish to attend. If you need additional assistance, contact Barbie Ferguson at barbie@mpe.org.
Is your MPE membership profile UP-TO-DATE?

Have you switched schools? Do you have a new home address, cell phone or email? Please let us know!

*Go to “Member Login” at www.mpe.org and update your profile today!

*Use your member ID located on the back of this journal. If you are logging in for the first time, your password will be your last name.

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

Good for us, Better for you!

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Trusted Choice®
As you know, in December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) became law. This new law, a reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, replaced No Child Left Behind with a model that affords states greater flexibility and control of its educational system.

Our state is deeply committed to improving opportunities and outcomes for every Mississippi student and ESSA provides a wonderful opportunity to help us achieve this vision. Over the coming months, we will be working with stakeholders across Mississippi to design a state plan that reflects our commitment to high standards, prepares all students for success after high school, and maintains our focus on ensuring all students achieve.

It is important to note some of the key requirements of the law:

- The law maintains annual assessments in grades 3-8 and high school.
- The law reaffirms that states are in control of their standards and assessments.
- The law sets parameters for a state’s accountability system but gives each state the flexibility to design a school accountability system that best meets the needs of students in that state.
- The law gives states the flexibility to work with local stakeholders to determine how educators should be evaluated and supported each year.
- The law requires states to measure at least one nonacademic factor, such as student engagement, when tracking schools’ performance.

ESSA also requires that states design their new systems with input from dozens of stakeholder groups, ranging from teachers to parents to community organizations. Responses from stakeholders will be used to formulate a comprehensive plan to submit to the U.S. Department of Education. Before Mississippi reaches out to its stakeholders, the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) will carefully plan the approach to ensure each engagement effort is meaningful; the right people are reached; the right questions are asked; and MDE staff are able to get the information necessary to design the best systems for students.

This is where you as educators are vitally important to this process. We want to hear from you on what indicators tell you that students, schools and school districts are successful. How do we measure that besides test scores?

What information and support do you need to help your students and make your schools excel? How can MDE encourage teacher leadership and development?

These are the types of questions that you will be asked in regional meetings around the state. If you are unable to attend the meetings, please send your comments and suggestions to MSSucceeds@mdek12.org.

All ESSA requirements, except those pertaining to accountability, go into effect in the 2016-17 school year. New accountability systems must be in place by 2017-18.

This is an exciting time to be working on behalf of students across our state and I believe the Mississippi State Board of Education’s strategic plan and ESSA will provide new opportunities for student success.

There is nothing more important to our state’s future prosperity than how well we succeed at preparing each and every child for his or her future. That is why I am so pleased that we are having these rich conversations around reimagining education in our state to better serve each and every one of our students. I would greatly value your participation and engagement in this work and I hope to hear from you soon.
NEW INITIATIVE DESIGNED TO HELP MORE STUDENTS ACHIEVE GOAL OF GOING TO COLLEGE

As educators, we spend a lot of time, energy, and resources convincing students that education is the key to a good job, financial security, and a brighter future. We focus on the “why,” but many of our students do not understand the “how.” Only 20.4 percent of adult Mississippians hold a bachelor’s degree or higher and only half have any education beyond high school. This means many of our K-12 students will be first-generation college students if they choose to attend college after high school.

Once students understand why pursuing a credential of value beyond high school is important, they may feel overwhelmed by the process of applying for college, determining how to pay for it and learning how to navigate the system once enrolled. The forms, deadlines, and documentation needed may seem like an insurmountable task on top of high school classwork, activities, and part-time jobs. This is especially true for first-generation students that may not have someone at home who can answer questions.

A new initiative is designed to help bridge this gap and help students navigate the process. College Countdown MS is part of a national effort, the American College Application Campaign that shares the goal of easing the admissions, financial aid, and enrollment process for students, particularly first-generation and low-income students, to ensure that they apply to at least one postsecondary institution.

Partners in College Countdown MS include the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning, the Mississippi Community College Board, the Mississippi Department of Education, State Office of Student Financial Aid, the College Knowledge Project, Mississippi Association of College Registrars and Admission Officers (MACRAO), the Get2College Program of Education Services Foundation, and The City of Jackson INYTM (I Need You To Make it) Youth Initiative. The target areas for 2016-17 include Jackson Public Schools and the Delta.

Some of the activities planned for students include Application Day, Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) Days, and College Signing Day, modeled on the excitement of athletic signing days. Many of the activities will occur during the school day and focus on students who might not otherwise apply to college.

Through the College Countdown MS FAFSA Days, students and their parents receive one-on-one assistance in completing the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) and the MS Office of Student Financial Aid application with guidance on funding from federal, state, college, and private resources. The events will be coordinated by Get2College, with support from the Mississippi Office of Student Financial Aid (MOSFA), for College Countdown MS.

Get2College is recruiting volunteers from financial aid offices, admissions offices, and community partners for our FAFSA Completion Days and will host training days in September. After training, they will reach out to the trained volunteers to assist in the FAFSA Completion Days between October 1 and March 31. The FAFSA Completion Days provide a great opportunity for colleges, universities, or other organizations to reach potential students and serve the broader community by promoting college access and success. To volunteer or gain more information on College Countdown MS, visit: www.collegecountdownms.com.

As educators, we all want to see our students succeed in school and in life after they leave our classrooms. Reaching out to give them the information they need to fulfill their dreams may seem like a small gesture to us, but it can make a lifetime of difference to them.
There is oftentimes a misconception that the summer is a quiet time of the year, with little activity taking place either on the campuses or at the Mississippi Community College Board. I am here to tell you that, as each of you probably knows all too well, this could not be any further from the truth!

One of the things that we are focusing on at the agency is partnerships—whether with each of our community colleges, with educational entities, with other state agencies, or with business and industry. By bringing various entities together to focus on single issues, we will better Mississippi.

In response to the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, each state is required to submit a state-wide plan that streamlines all aspects of workforce training. Last summer, Governor Bryant’s office led the efforts to draft this plan with the core partners being the MCCB, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, Mississippi Department of Human Services and Mississippi Department of Education. Largely due in part to the collaborative effort, Mississippi was the first state to submit a plan to the U.S. Department of Labor, which was done on October 30, and back in July, we received word that our plan was approved, once again making us the first state with this distinction. Without strong partnerships in place, this effort would not have been possible.

Another partnership that benefited our state a few months ago was when the Mississippi Department of Employment Security reached out to our agency about joining them on a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Labor for funds to be used for apprenticeship programs. By working together, we were able to secure a $200,000 Apprenticeship USA State Accelerator Grant to expand and expedite apprenticeship programs in Mississippi. Because we received this specific grant, we will now be eligible to apply for additional State Expansion Grants in the coming weeks.

One last example of partnerships is conversations we are having with the Mississippi Department of Human Services to identify financial opportunities to potentially benefit the community colleges. DHS has access to many federal resources not available to other agencies and by working together, the community colleges might be able to access much needed financial assistance for specific programs.

Partnerships are vital to the state’s success and we are committed to working with others to better Mississippi. It takes all of us working together, being open to change, and moving in a unified direction to expand opportunities in our great state.
The William Carey University School of Education can help you go the extra mile in your career through convenient and flexible graduate-level programs. These programs allow the student to complete classes in either hybrid or online formats that are perfect for the working professional.

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- Master of Education – The Art of Teaching (Secondary Education, 7-12)
- Master of Education – The Art of Teaching (Mild and Moderate Disabilities, K-12)
- Master of Education – Gifted Education, K-12
- Master of Education – Educational Leadership
- Master of Education – Interscholastic Athletic Administration
- Specialist in Education – Educational Leadership (Administration Certification)

Learn more about Carey by calling (601) 318-6600 or visiting WMCAREY.EDU.
INFUSING BEST PRACTICES AND CREATING A DIVERSE COMMUNITY WITH IPOD TECHNOLOGY

Dr. Theresa Dumas, Assistant Professor
Department of Teacher Education
Mississippi Valley State University

Many students are exposed to the many facets of technology at an early age. By the time they enter an academic setting, they have already acquired an extensive repertoire of high-tech language and proficiencies. The traditional classroom lecture, pen, pencil, and writing notebook have been replaced and augmented by computers, facebook, Notebook, Kindle, IPods, IPads, Skype, cell phones, videos, blogs, or YouTube.

Teacher interns at Mississippi Valley State University are tapping their technological expertise to blend traditional and technological instruction in Delta area schools, where they are assigned field placement their senior year in Directed Teaching. Each teacher intern is trained on the creation and implementation of podcast production in their seminar class before entering their field placement setting. They collectively critique and evaluate each podcast by examining how the application of benchmark and best practices has been achieved.

Podcasting is a movement that is grabbing the interest of scholars from all disciplines in education. It has become known as an instructional tool that allows students and teachers to combine classroom instruction and technological knowledge in their quest for a quality and innovative education. With the integration of IPod technology in the curriculum, teacher interns at Mississippi Valley State University are encouraged to remain abreast of new and evolving technology. This knowledge can invigorate and cultivate the application of strategies and philosophies guiding instruction for continual growth in their craft.

Instruction via IPod technology serves as a catalyst in promoting a positive classroom environment where students are encouraged to explore their thirst for knowledge using their technological expertise in learning new and innovative concepts. Utilizing IPods in classroom instruction supports student’s exploration in enjoyable, organized, and thought-provoking activities reflecting best practices, high expectations, differentiated instruction, theory, and state standards. Mississippi Valley State University teacher interns merge IPod technology with traditional classroom instruction to be used as a motivator for increasing student participation, deterring unsatisfactory behavior, encouraging cooperative learning, and experiencing immediate feedback.

Creating a connection between technology and traditional face-to-face instruction is not only beneficial but necessary in today’s society. Mississippi Valley State University trains teacher interns to introduce and implement innovative instruction in Mississippi Delta schools by providing students the opportunity to become immersed in learning through IPod technology. Using IPod technology, these teacher interns are employing best practices and promoting diversity to deliver quality classroom instruction.
Chelonnda Seroyer and William Martinez will celebrate the teaching profession during MPE’s 2017 Best Practices Symposium.

- A former high school English teacher in Alabama, Chelonnda is an educational consultant and international presenter who speaks around the world on the subjects of classroom management and effective teaching. She often shares the stage with Dr. Harry Wong and Dr. Rosemary Wong.

- Through American Sign Language paired with singing, William shares the story of a boy who grew up in a deaf household with little exposure to tv, radio, or movies. Because of his incredible 8th grade music teacher and the love and support of his parents, he came out of his silent world and discovered his voice through music. He celebrates the incredible impact educators and parents have on each child’s life…regardless of their struggles. (www.william-martinez.com, www.signingthesong.com)

“Chelonnda is an awesome speaker, highly entertaining and funny, yet very practical with her methods. William will validate the teaching profession.” – Dr. Harry Wong

We will also share the latest information from MDE, as well as the capitol. Author and motivational speaker Janie Walters will close out our day. “Life changing,” “fabulous,” and “wonderful” are just a few of the comments she has received from those attending symposium in the past. CEUs will be available.

Saturday, April 8, 2017
The Hilton
Jackson, MS

We hope to see you there!
WHY MPE?

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

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*May not include local dues †Liability insurance not included

Your MPE membership includes...

- Professional liability protection of $2,000,000 with $3,000,000 maximum
- Legal assistance related to employment or professional matters per MPE policy
- $10,000 accidental death & dismemberment coverage
- $2,500 assault related property damage
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- Graduate & undergraduate scholarships awarded annually
- NBCT recertification scholarships awarded annually
- Classroom grant opportunities awarded annually
- Free regional trainings offering CEUs to members at no cost
- Unlimited professional advice available 24/7
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- MPE Journal published three times per year
- Staff monitors legislation at the state capitol, with weekly updates provided to membership
- Every dollar of your dues stays in Mississippi for your benefit! MPE does not support political candidates.