MPE JOURNAL

MPE’S NEW PRESIDENT,
DONNA ROBBINS

STAR Teachers
District Teachers of the Year
Meet your new MPE Board
MPE Scholarship Winners
Best Practices Symposium Highlights
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### 2014 2015

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<th>Area Directors</th>
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What an exciting year to be a part of Mississippi Professional Educators! President Deedre Coll has led in a most gracious and professional manner during our Best Practices Symposium and this past year, and will continue to serve as Past President on our Board of Directors. Thank you for your vision and leadership, Deedre!

Our Executive Director Kelly Riley continues to amaze me with her expertise in legislative affairs and her ability to guide MPE by providing us with the knowledge and vision needed for us to continue growing and leading in our profession. I am so thankful for her experience and for the respect she has earned from educators, as well as from legislators throughout the state.

My parents taught my siblings and me that what was worth doing was worth doing well. So I worked hard, and loved it, all the way through school (MS College, ’80, ’92)! I am a product of Mississippi’s public education system (S.D. Lee, Columbus ’76). My wonderful husband Rob (Callaway, JPS ’75) and I have two young adult children, Bryan (Clinton ’02, MSU ’06 and ’09) and Bethany (Clinton’05, MSU ’08), who were also taught in Mississippi public schools, in four separate districts. They have done graduate work inside and outside of our state, and excelled educationally alongside students from other regions of the U.S. as well as internationally. Am I a bragging mom? Okay, maybe. However, my point is this: I BELIEVE IN PUBLIC EDUCATION IN MISSISSIPPI! We have issues, but positive things are happening! So let’s all brag about it!

This year, MPE embraced this Vision Statement: As Educators, we are dedicated to mastering the science and the art of teaching, with constant awareness of educational research, trends, and best practices that will enable us to support and encourage our colleagues. We do this to provide Mississippi students a quality education in safe and respectful environments.

Entwined in this Vision Statement are my goals for this year:
* Expand to 12,600 members
* Promote professionalism among educators
* Promote respect for educators and the education system
* Expand opportunities for professional development in all MPE regions
* Continue to recognize educators who make a difference through our undergraduate and graduate scholarship programs, My Favorite Teacher, etc.
* Continue work on Legislative Priorities:
  * Full Funding of MAEP
  * Common Core State Standards
  * Educators’ Compensation & Benefits
* Continue to connect inexperienced, experienced, and retired educators to MPE

It’s going to be another exciting year to be an educator. So let’s all brag about it!
As my term as President of Mississippi Professional Educators draws to a close, I am reminded of why I joined this organization. Being a teacher wasn’t always as ‘easy as apple pie.’ There were times when I needed support and encouragement from those who shared my passion for the education and achievement of children. In looking for an organization with quality member services and a staff that would be there when I needed them, I discovered MPE.

As a member, I had several opportunities to recruit others to join over the years. When I shared the mission of our members and all they have accomplished for the cause of education the choice is clear. ‘Apples for apples’ we truly are the premier professional association in Mississippi.

Some say ‘the apple doesn’t fall far from the tree.’ In my opinion, this is quite true. After attending many events sponsored by MPE and meeting other members from all over the state, it is evident that those of us who belong to the organization reflect the core values as we lead our daily lives. We truly believe that teachers, administrators, parents and students should work together to promote a positive environment for learning. We have a responsibility to represent ourselves and, in turn, the organization in a professional manner. The continuity of our characteristics as members of MPE is appealing to others and they are eager to belong.

After being a member for several years, then having the privilege of serving on the board alongside many amazing people, it is no stretch to say this organization has become ‘the apple of my eye.’ I have enjoyed my time as president immensely and am so thankful to have had the opportunity.

I now leave things in the very capable hands of Mrs. Donna Robbins. She is extremely knowledgeable about all things related to education. She has a heart for the organization and will lead us to achieve phenomenal things. I am so excited to see what the future has in store for Mississippi Professional Educators. In closing, I leave you with one simple question, ‘How did you like them apples?’

**MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS’ CLASSROOM GRANT PROGRAM**

MPE invites its members to apply for our classroom grant program to try out a new idea or buy the “extras” for an already great lesson plan or project. Up to 16 $500 grants will be awarded to teachers or instructors to enhance their instructional program.

The deadline to apply is August 29, 2014. For more information, please visit our website at www.mpe.org.
“All growth depends upon activity. There is no development physically or intellectually without effort, and effort means work.”

-- Calvin Coolidge

What are your plans for your own professional growth? What professional article or book have you read recently? Do your summer plans include any professional development? MPE strongly believes in the professional growth of our members so that they, in turn, may become more effective teachers. We continue to support the professional growth of our members in a number of ways:

• Graduate Scholarships: The MPE Board of Directors voted in September to increase the maximum number of graduate scholarships MPE awards each year from five to ten. We recognize nine members on page 8 who have received $1,000 scholarships to pursue graduate level studies at a college or university in Mississippi.

• Undergraduate Scholarships: During our recent 2014 Best Practices Symposium, we awarded $500 scholarships to ten of our student members for their studies (see page 16). MPE believes it is critical to support and mentor the next generation of educators!

• NBCT Recertification Scholarships: Your MPE Board of Directors recently voted to offer a new member benefit. Beginning next year, we will award $650 scholarships to ten members each year who wish to pursue National Board recertification. I will share more information on this new benefit in future emails, as well as on our website.

• Regional Trainings: MPE offered sixteen regional trainings this year, as compared to eight last year. The trainings focused on M-STAR, CCSS, and PLCs. More than 300 educators attended these trainings throughout the state. We are already beginning to plan for next year’s trainings. Please feel free to email me (kelly@mpe.org) with your suggestions for training topics.

MPE offers these and other resources for our members through the leadership of your MPE Board of Directors. I’d like to thank Dr. Benny Hornsby, Mary Hill Shular and Rick Smither for their commitment to our association, as they rotated off of the board recently. We are very excited to welcome Lori Brennan, Anjanette Powers, and Jason Ross to the board. Visit page 11 to learn more about our newest board members. MPE is looking forward to a very successful year with Donna Robbins, a first grade teacher at Clinton Park Elementary in Clinton, leading our association!

I hope you enjoy this issue of the MPE Journal. Great things are happening in classrooms throughout our state, and MPE is always proud to recognize our members. Pages 12-13 provide a glimpse of our 2014 Best Practices Symposium. While we’ve recognized them in ads throughout this issue, I’d like to take this opportunity to thank our platinum sponsors for their support: The Bower Foundation; Jones Walker, LLP; Liberty Mutual Group; Mississippi National Institute for School Leadership (NISL); and, PREPS.

If you are looking for professional development opportunities this summer, you may visit the “Professional Development” section of our website (www.mpe.org) for opportunities in your area. Thank you for investing in your students this past year. Have a wonderful summer!
Congratulates our 2014 Outstanding Interns

Alcorn State University  
Bellhaven University  
Blue Mountain College  
Delta State University  
Jackson State University  
Millsaps College  
Mississippi College  
Mississippi State University  
Mississippi University for Women  
Mississippi Valley State University  
Rust College  
Tougaloo College  
University of Mississippi  
University of Southern Mississippi  
William Carey College

Courtney J. Ford  
Kelsey Wiebertdink  
Katelyn Grose  
Briana Davey  
Alexander Drake  
Tara Johnston  
Charles William Brand  
Lindsey Franklin  
Jacie Meyers  
Dexter Deon Ross  
Deldrick J. LeaSure  
Michael Dale Warren  
Kathryn Sims  
Leah Jones

Weekly Emails

Are you receiving weekly emails from our Executive Director? To keep up on the latest in MPE and education news, as well as legislative updates, email kelly@mpe.org and ask to join our email list.

Retiree Reflections

Retiring soon?  Already a retired member?  We have some good news for you.  Beginning in July, you can choose a LIFETIME RETIRED MEMBERSHIP for only $70.  Now you can be assured you will receive the MPE Journal and updates via emails without having to remember to renew every year.

If you are retiring this year, please remember to change your membership classification and to notify us if there is an email address change.  If you are going to continue to work part-time, you will want to consider changing to the part-time membership for only $60 a year.

Enjoy your retirement!!

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

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

1 Educator insurance benefits not available in all states. Coverage underwritten and provided by Liberty Mutual Insurance Company and its affiliates, 175 Berkeley Street, Boston, MA 02116© 2011 Liberty Mutual Insurance Company. All rights reserved.
Congratulations to the following recipients of MPE’s 2014 Graduate Scholarship Award. Each member will receive $1,000 towards their graduate studies.

Shanta Green
William Carey University

Rebecca Harrison
Delta State University

Sam Hisaw
University of Mississippi

Jennifer Parker
William Carey University

Emily Pearson
Delta State University

Kristal Pollard
University of Southern Mississippi

Michelle Ramshur
William Carey University

Lorre Rose
William Carey University

Camille Stanfield
University of Mississippi
INSPIRE AND ELECTRIFY

As educators, our charge is to, “fill the shoes,” “wear the hat,” or “play the role” of many titles, but most importantly our job is to inspire and electrify. Each day begins a new journey and each day we accept the task before us to make the most of every teachable moment and in doing so we must inspire and electrify every student, as well as ourselves.

Aspire to be the one your students remember as the teacher that inspired them. Don’t just tell them they can be whatever they want to be; lead, guide and help them achieve the goals they set for themselves. When we lead, guide and help, we show students that we care about them now and will continue to care and in the future you will be remembered as “the one” who inspired and electrified year after year after year.

Dare to be “the one” who makes learning fun and memorable not only for your students, but also for yourself! Create learning experiences that will follow both student and teacher for years to come. Make it the ride of a life time, no regrets. Inspire, electrify, reap the rewards many times over. I dare you!

Ask your students: How bad do you want it? How hard are you willing to work to get what you want? Remind them, you are right there with them every step of the way to help them reach any and every goal they set out to achieve. There is no better feeling between a teacher and a student (or a group of students) than when “the light bulb comes on” or you see them experience an “aha moment” - when you can visibly see them comprehend the objective you have been working so hard to teach them. It’s in a moment like this I’ve actually looked at my kids (they all understand that once they entered my classroom, they become one of mine) and said, “can I get an Amen!” and low and behold I get an “Amen!”

Lead by example - When your students observe you working hard to achieve your goals for the day they will follow your lead. Display your goals on the wall for your students to see. I suggest putting the goals on a big chart tablet and keeping them posted on the wall for day to day use. Check them off as the day progresses. Be realistic in setting your goals, make it attainable for both parties, and don’t be afraid to increase the goals as the year moves along. This will allow you all as a team or as a community to look not only at what has been accomplished each day, week, month and school year, but also what you’re striving toward. Your students will be inspired and motivated by your work together. It is amazing to witness how hard they will work to accomplish what they set out to achieve.

When I was diagnosed with cancer, one of my coworkers that I had the pleasure of mentoring and is now a great friend (she actually calls me her “Delta Momma”), sparked a coalition of support for me called “Team Cheryl” in the form of small green bracelets similar to the yellow “Livestrong” bands you saw after Lance Armstrong was diagnosed with cancer. We mailed and handed out green “Team Cheryl” bracelets all over the United States. Many of my former students found out about them and suddenly texts, emails, Facebook messages, calls and cards began to pour in over the next 7 months. Each student had a story to tell or a “thank you” for how I had taught them or impacted their life. Because I had inspired and electrified them, they in turn inspired me throughout my 7 month journey with Thyroid Cancer to never give up, keep on fighting and to carry on. It is through this experience that I am confident I was able to be “the one” educator in so many of my students lives who inspired and electrified. Now the question is, “are you ready to be ‘the one’?”

Cheryl Howard
MPE Board of Directors

DARE TO BE “THE ONE” WHO MAKES LEARNING FUN AND MEMORABLE NOT ONLY FOR YOUR STUDENTS, BUT ALSO FOR YOURSELF! CREATE LEARNING EXPERIENCES THAT WILL FOLLOW BOTH STUDENT AND TEACHER FOR YEARS TO COME.
MPE is proud to congratulate and honor the following members who were named their respective district’s Teacher of the Year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MPE MEMBER</th>
<th>SCHOOL DISTRICT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Michelle Holman</td>
<td>Amory</td>
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<td>Alphia Myers</td>
<td>Canton</td>
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<td>Trista Eaton</td>
<td>Chickasaw County</td>
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<td>Annie Covington</td>
<td>Coffeeville</td>
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<td>Jennifer Bass</td>
<td>Covington County</td>
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<td>Wanda Dean</td>
<td>Forrest Municipal</td>
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<td>Mary Jackson</td>
<td>Forrest County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tracey Fryfogle</td>
<td>George County</td>
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<td>Michelle Jones</td>
<td>Hancock County</td>
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<td>Barbara Taylor</td>
<td>Jackson County</td>
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<td>Susan Bender</td>
<td>Jackson Public</td>
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<td>Clint Smith</td>
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<td>Janine Lee</td>
<td>Lafayette County</td>
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<td>Kim Abel</td>
<td>Lamar County</td>
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<td>Kathy Waycaster</td>
<td>Lee County</td>
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<td>Katherine Furr</td>
<td>Lincoln County</td>
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<td>James Sanzin</td>
<td>Long Beach</td>
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<td>Susanna Oglesby</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gaye Atkinson</td>
<td>McComb</td>
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<td>Lori Brennan</td>
<td>Ocean Springs</td>
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<td>Debra McCormick</td>
<td>Pearl River County</td>
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<td>Lela Draughn</td>
<td>Perry County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Beverly Smith</td>
<td>Richton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alisha Foxworth</td>
<td>Senatobia Municipal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Annette McBryde</td>
<td>South Tippah</td>
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<td>Cynthia Howie</td>
<td>Tishomingo County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynne Mize</td>
<td>Tupelo Public</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martha Charlwood</td>
<td>Union County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kayla Jennings</td>
<td>West Jasper</td>
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</table>
MPE WELCOMES NEW BOARD MEMBERS

ANJANETTE POWERS – UNIVERSITY

Anjanette has served as an instructor of teacher education at Delta State University since 2007. Prior to 2007, she was a Title I remedial teacher at Heidelberg Elementary in Clarksdale. She earned her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education, her Master of Education in Elementary Education, and her Educational Specialist in Elementary Education from Delta State University. A member of MPE since 2011, she serves as a Building Rep and faculty advisor to DSU’s Student Association of MPE.

JASON ROSS - COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Jason has served as a mathematics instructor at Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC) since 2001. He also serves as an adjunct mathematics instructor at William Carey University, as well as Assistant Coordinator for Institutional Effectiveness at MGCCC. He earned his Bachelor of Science in Mathematics Education, as well as his Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction, from USM. He expects to earn his Doctor of Philosophy this December. Jason served as President of the Mississippi Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) in 2010-2011. He has served as Treasurer of MCTM since 2012.

LORI BRENnan - REP-AT-LARGE

Lori teaches English at Ocean Springs High School. A member of MPE since 2006, she also serves as a MPE Building Rep. Lori earned her Bachelor of Science in Liberal Arts from USM, her Master’s in Educational Leadership from the University of South Alabama, and her Education Specialist in Administrative Leadership from Walden University. She served on MPE’s 2013 Graduate Scholarship Committee. Lori was one of five Gulf Coast teachers recognized in 2011 by Hancock Bank as a recipient of the Leo W. Seal Teacher Recognition Award.

PHILENE ALLEN – RETIREE

Philene joined MPE in 1982. She served as MPE President in 2000. She received her Master of Education degree from Delta State University. She is a member of Delta Kappa Gamma and the Mississippi Retired Public Employees’ Association. Philene has been re-appointed to the board to serve another three year term.
Richard Baliko is serving as an Educator in Residence in MDE's Office of Student Assessment. The Educator in Residence program was implemented by the State Board of Education as a way of building capacity within both school districts and the Mississippi Department of Education. It is envisioned that this reciprocal relationship will allow educational professionals at the school, district, and state levels to work in a new professional setting for a specified period of time (generally 1-3 years) on focused projects, innovations, or initiatives. A member of MPE since 2009, Richard previously taught math at B. F. Liddell Middle School in the Noxubee County School District for eleven years. His responsibilities as an Educator in Residence include helping with our state’s transition to the PARCC assessments, as well as assisting in the implementation of the Mississippi K-3 Assessment Support System (MKAS2). Congratulations, Richard!
HB 71 provides that the standard teacher contract prescribed by the State Board of Education provide that licensed employees will earn a salary payable in equal installments beginning in the first month of employment.

HB 116 exempts certain records created or collected in the course of academic research at a community college or state institution of higher learning from the Mississippi Public Records Act.

HB 426 defines the term “High School Equivalency Diploma” and revises references to the “General Educational Development (GED)” to “High School Equivalency Diploma.”

HB 455 allows the state to take over individual schools after two years of “F” ratings. The bill provides that a conservator may terminate any employee of a district taken over by the state. The bill further provides that any licensed employee in a conservator district whose employment has been terminated shall not have the right to request a hearing on such termination. HB 455 also removes the charter school law requirement that the Executive Director of the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board be an attorney.

HB 504 provides for a $1,500 pay raise in the 2014-2015 school year, as well as a $1,000 pay raise in the 2015-2016 school year. The bill also increases the base salary for new teachers. HB 504 provides for the establishment of the School Recognition Program beginning with the 2016-2017 school year to recognize and reward schools that improve a letter grade under the accountability model or that retain a rating of “A” or “B.” Schools that improve a grade level will earn $100 per student, as will schools that remain an “A.” Those schools that remain rated a “B” will receive $75 per student. School recognition awards must be spent for nonrecurring salary supplements for teachers and staff of the school. Award funds shall not be used for administrators, equipment or materials. HB 504 also provides that the Legislature develop a plan by July 1, 2016, to reward high-performing teachers in “C,” “D” and “F” schools.

SB 2090 authorizes local school boards to decide if their district will process payroll on a semi-monthly or monthly basis for non-licensed staff.

SSB 2423 amends current law to provide for the assignment and responsibilities of professional school counselors. Among other provisions, SB 2423 requires that professional school counselors spend a minimum of 80% of their contractual time in the delivery of services to students as outlined by the American School Counselor Association.

SB 2571 makes several technical amendments regarding the administration of public school districts. In addition to returning the authority for setting the school year calendar to local school boards, the bill also provides that students in schools that lose accreditation for any reason other than academic performance or financial accountability may continue to participate in extracurricular activities. SB 2571 also allows teachers greater control over when and how supplies are purchased for their classrooms.
Congratulations to the following recipients of MPE’s 2014 Undergraduate Scholarship Award. Each student member was awarded a scholarship in the amount of $500.

Briana Davey
Delta State University

Leslie Hebert
Mississippi College

Kelly Herbert
University of Mississippi

Karly Kliesch
Mississippi State University

Rachel Pitts
William Carey University

Wesley Pope
Belhaven University

Deante’ Spann
Alcorn State University

Casey Thompson
Blue Mountain College

Tessa Willoughby
University of Southern Mississippi

Tasha Vaughn
Mississippi University for Women
MPE is proud to congratulate and honor the following members who were recognized in April by the Mississippi Economic Council as STAR (Student-Teacher Achievement Recognition) Teachers.

Juliana Plaxico, Alcorn Central High School
Mary Beth Black, Amory High School
Amanda A. Moak, Bogue Chitto School
Stephanie Thomas, Broad Street High School
Sherry D. McReynolds, Caledonia High School
Robert W. White, Columbia High School
Marilyn C. Dunaway, Deer Creek School
Rebecca I. Knight, Enterprise High School
Diana B. Sanders, John F. Kennedy High School
Jamie E. Sample, Kosciusko High School
Monica L. Cullen, Leake Central High School
Tracey S. Hunter, Lewisburg High School
David R. Teske, Louisville High School
Patricia M. May, Magee High School
Stephanie S. Bowlin, McLaurin High School
Jack Jinkins, Mendenhall High School
Lori S. Britt, Mississippi School of the Arts
Meghan L. Cates, Mooreville High School
Kim H. Snow, Morton High School
Corinne S. Butler, Myrtle High School
Ron R. Swart, Nanih Waiya High School
Brittany S. Morgan, North Forrest High School
Jennifer C. Wilson, Northwest Rankin High School
Andrea P. Clark, Oak Grove High School
Megan L. Fortenberry, Oak Grove High School
Renee’ S. Dayan, Oxford High School
Leigh Ann Purnell, Pearl High School
Pam S. Farr, Pearl River Central High School
Melanee S. Slade, Purvis High School
Sabrina J. Henderson, Richton High School
Martha E. Brann, Ripley High School
Elizabeth M. Scrivner, Riverside High School
Thomas A. Powell, Saint Martin High School
Jenny A. Simmons, Saltillo High School
Bradley A. Robbins, Sebastopol High School
Linda Sokovich, Seminary High School
James J. Bowman, Stone High School
Jan C. Gunter, Sumrall High School
Carolyn A. Palmer, Taylorsville High School
Cindy W. Howie, Tishomingo County High School
Raquel M. Morris, West Union High School
Melanie A. Harlow, Winona High School
Mark G. Brown, West Jones High School
A teacher pay raise, funding for all high school juniors to take the ACT and additional support for the literacy initiative are some of the key highlights from the 2014 legislative session. This marked another busy legislative session for education.

We did not receive full funding of MAEP, which is a priority for the Mississippi Board of Education. The Board and I are well aware of the impact of higher standards, the 3rd grade literacy law, and educator evaluation on your work. These new initiatives need additional support and resources, and we will continue to appeal to legislators for the funds needed to make this shift in public education a success.

However, overall, I believe some important and positive legislation survived the legislative process, which will benefit the state’s educational system and our students. First, I want to congratulate our teachers for their fervent support for a pay raise. The pay raise that came from the House and Senate was influenced by your continued work and outreach to lawmakers. This is an important step in rewarding our experienced educators while providing an incentive for students to enter the profession and for new teacher graduates to stay in Mississippi.

I admire your grit and dedication, particularly in light of all the changes and challenges in education that have taken place over the last few years. I believe lawmakers realize the value of your work.

For the first year of implementation, the Legislature appropriated $9.5 million and this year that amount increased to $15 million. We plan to use those funds to provide support directly to school districts through literacy coaching and mini grants. We look forward to sharing additional information with you as we fine tune our plans.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued dedication to the profession and your students. This is a time of great change in education in Mississippi, and I know change can be challenging. The MDE will do all we can to provide the services and professional development you need to impact student outcomes. Raising student achievement is at the heart of what I do each day, and I look forward to working with you as we move Mississippi forward.
The 2014 legislative session ended on April 2, and there were several important bills passed and signed by Governor Bryant that pertain to community colleges.

For FY 2015, the community colleges received an increase of approximately $11 million, or 4.6%, compared to FY 2014. There is $3 million included in the appropriations for construction and/or repairs and renovations on our campuses. The MCCB received an increase of $104,000 compared to last year. Additionally, the colleges will receive $23 million in bonds to be divided among the institutions. As I write this, the appropriations and bond bills are awaiting Governor Bryant’s signature.

House Bill No. 426 changes all references to “GED” in state law to “high school equivalency diploma,” and also says “high school equivalency diploma” means a high school diploma that has been approved by the Mississippi Community College Board. This bill was introduced by Representative Nolan Mettetal at the request of our agency. Currently, we have no plan to move away from the “GED” test. Another bill of interest is Senate Bill No. 2084, which allows contract employees to use up to six weeks of earned major medical leave within one year of either adopting a child or receiving foster placement of a child. Finally, one of the changes brought about by Senate Bill No. 2571 is that courses mandated for subject area testing as a requirement for graduation from a public school are now eligible for dual credit. All of these bills have been signed by Governor Bryant.

I often say that our community colleges have a national reputation as being among the best in the nation. At the beginning of the year, we received news from two different organizations that once again confirm this.

The Aspen Institute announced its top 150 community colleges in the country that are now eligible for the Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence. The chosen institutions have demonstrated strong outcomes in three areas: student success in persistence, completion, and transfer; consistent improvement in outcomes over time; and equity in outcomes for students of all racial/ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds. Among our state’s colleges, East Mississippi, Hinds, Holmes, Itawamba, Gulf Coast, Pearl River, and Southwest are all included in this list. The only states with more eligible colleges are Arizona, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Minnesota, and Texas. Ten finalists will be announced in the fall, and the winner will be announced in early 2015.

Additionally, three of our state’s colleges have been named to Community College Week’s list of fastest growing community colleges. Meridian was ranked 28th of the top 50 colleges fastest growing colleges with enrollments of 2,500-4,999; Northwest ranked 39th of the top 50 colleges fastest growing colleges with enrollments of 5,000-9,999; and Gulf Coast ranked 36th of the top 50 colleges fastest growing colleges with enrollments of 10,000 or more. The rankings were based on comparisons of Fall 2011 to Fall 2012 enrollment, as reported to the federal Integrated Postsecondary Educational Data System (IPEDS).

As the school year winds down, I thank each of you for the outstanding job you do. You are to be commended for dedicating your professional career to bettering all of our citizens!
Dan Fuller  
Forest Hill High School  
*Forest Hill Medieval Faire*

As a culminating project for our study of medieval British Literature and the *Canterbury Tales*, the Senior English students at Forest Hill High School presented a Medieval Faire for the 10th grade World History students, along with 4th and 5th graders from our feeder pattern elementary schools. Students were placed into groups responsible for different aspects of the Faire. Students researched their assigned topics, becoming school experts in their field, and presented this information to the students who visited their booths. Topics included medieval dances, metalwork, heraldry, feudalism, King Arthur and associated legends, architecture, and religious life. Selected experts from the community were also invited to provide additional authenticity.

The students started their study of medieval British Literature with *Beowulf* in September. Our unit on Old and Middle English texts continued through November with the Medieval Faire held at the school on Friday, November 9th. Students learned the historical context of the period and were able to make appropriate connections between the literature of the period and their own research. Students also developed effective presentations to teach complex concepts to others, demonstrating both their own understanding of the topic and an ability to appropriately scaffold this knowledge to a younger audience.

Cynthia Ballus  
Bay Springs Middle School  
*Our Building*

“Our Building” provided the students the opportunity to complete a project using Lego building blocks to erect a scale model of our building. The students had completed all topics utilized in the project and completed all calculations and construction with accuracy. Once completed, the students wanted to construct the remaining buildings on campus. The project proceeded so smoothly that next year I will allow the students to measure, perform the calculations and construct the other buildings. The students’ work is now displayed in the trophy case in the lobby of the building. The students used their knowledge of ratio, proportion scale factors, area measurement accuracy and conversion in this project.
The unit I conducted using the Novel Tie instructional guide and novels purchased with the MPE Classroom Grant was a success. Through Class President by Johanna Hurwitz, my students learned about student government elections, comparing them to real Presidential elections. Our social studies teacher taught about the Presidential election in the fall, and our school conducted a mock election. We read the novel, discussed characters and situations, identified causes/effects, and stated facts/opinions used in campaigning. Through this unit, my students used compare/contrast to learn what the U.S. President’s duties are versus a school class president’s duties.

The MPE grant money I received for the 2012-2013 school year provided the perfect opportunity to build my Hooked on Books – Let’s READ Library for my students. I used the funds to purchase multiple copies of books for use during guided reading instruction and to develop take-home bags including leveled nonfiction books and activities to complete after reading. Using these books, I was able to engage my students in meaningful reading experiences, help them increase their fluency, and encourage their love for reading.
FACULTY COMPENSATION IS AN ISSUE WE MUST ADDRESS

Legislative sessions are never easy. This is particularly true in Mississippi, where there are always more needs than resources. Fortunately, revenue projections were revised late in the session and that allowed for some good things to emerge.

The teacher pay raise is a step in the right direction and will help bring our salaries more in line with neighboring states, provided they don’t raise salaries for teachers for the next two years. The additional $10 million for the Mississippi Adequate Education Program provides more resources to schools, although it is a long way from full funding. The appropriation for Mississippi Public Universities increased $20 million over the FY 14 appropriation.

However, while this is all good news, there is still an issue we must address. Faculty compensation is not where we need it to be at our universities. This is an issue for our state and our nation. A recent study from the American Association of University Professors found that “the post-recession stagnation in full-time faculty salaries is not yet over.”

The study found that the average salary rose 2.2 percent in 2013-14 from the year before. However, 22.4 percent of public institutions saw a decrease in average salaries, while only 3.4 percent of public institutions had an average increase of 6 percentage points or more.

The study found the national average salary at public doctoral institutions to be $91,918 and at public master’s institutions to be $70,683. They also broke the data down by region. The East South Central Region, which includes Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi and Tennessee, has an average salary of $86,666 at doctoral institutions and $64,949 at master’s institutions.

The Southern Regional Education Board’s Fact Book on Higher Education 2013 includes average salaries for full-time instructional faculty at public four-year colleges and universities, 2011-12:

- National average: $79,500
- Northeast average: $86,200
- West average: $83,200
- Midwest average: $77,500
- SREB states average: $75,100
- Mississippi average: $64,700

Among SREB states, Mississippi average salaries are only higher than one other state: Arkansas, with an average salary of $62,700. When adjusted for inflation, Mississippi salaries are 2.8 percent less than they were in 2006-07.

The environment in higher education is more competitive than ever. We compete for students and research grants. To attract students and research grants, we must compete for the best and brightest faculty. We must attract and retain them. While compensation may not be the only factor, it is certainly an important one and an issue we must address.

Now is the time to tackle this issue. Revenue projections have continued to increase. As Mississippi continues to work its way out of the recession, placing state resources in higher education and in the faculty who are preparing the workforce and leaders of tomorrow is a wise investment that will help accelerate the recovery and put us on a path to prosperity.
Why MPE?

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

<table>
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<th>2013 - 2014 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATION(S)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Professional with liability insurance</td>
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* May not include local dues

- Professional liability protection of $2 million with $3 million maximum
- Legal assistance related to employment or professional matters per MPE policy
- $10,000 in accidental death & dismemberment coverage
- $2,500 assault related property damage
- Only organization to provide identity theft coverage with membership
- Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarships awarded annually
- Classroom Grant opportunities
- Free Regional Trainings
- 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.