

MPE Journal

www.mpe.org

Summer 2007 Vol.19, No.1



MPE's New President Dennis Silas and his family

In this issue!

**LT. GOVERNOR CANDIDATES' QUESTIONNAIRE
ADDED BENEFITS - IDENTITY THEFT & LONG TERM CARE**

YOUR MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS ORGANIZATION

toll free: 1-800-523-0269 • (601) 355-5517

MPE Board of Directors 2007-2008

President

Dennis Silas
1117 Morgan St.
Cleveland, MS 38732
662-745-6657
dennis.silas@lycos.com

President-elect

Dianne Sellers
218 Woodland Hills Dr.
Quitman, MS 39335-8664
601-776-3207
Dianne3207@bellsouth.net

Secretary-Treasurer

Rhonda Travis
2160 Glen Carter Rd.
Magnolia, MS 39652-9309
601-776-3207
trav4wrnj@yahoo.com

Past-President

Dr. Stacy Reeves
13 Bounds Lane
Hattiesburg, MS 39402
601-318-6604
stacy.reeves@wmcarey.edu

District 1

Candace T. Moore, Ph.D.
1116 CR 174
Guntown, MS 38849
662-869-3724
candace.moore@leecountyschools.us

District 2

Deborah Roane
76 Highway 9, West
Bruce, MS 38915
662-983-4591
droane@alhoun.k12.ms.us

District 3

Sonya Swafford
218 N. Bolivar Ave.
Cleveland, MS 38732
662-402-6885
sonswaf@yahoo.com

District 4

Amy Prisock
839 Blackjack Road
Starkville, MS 39759
662-325-8824
ahp3@colled.msstate.edu

District 5

Lia Landrum
57 Hoskins Creek Rd.
Ellisville, MS 39437
601-477-8451
lialandrum@hotmail.com

District 6

Becky Fields
307 Indian Gate Circle
Ridgeland, MS 39157
(H) 601-856-6720
bfields@madison-schools.com

District 7

Paul Christian Graves
P.O. Box 28
Tylertown, MS 39667
601-222-0826
cgraves@npsd.k12.ms.us

District 8

Dr. Barry Morris
498 Tuscan Avenue
Hattiesburg, MS
(O) 601-318-6587
bmorris@wmcarey.edu

Rep.-at-large

Mike McNece
40 Abide Drive
Greenville, MS 38701
(O) 662-335-4527
m_mcece@yahoo.com

Retirees

Philene Allen
405 S. First Ave.
Cleveland, MS 39732
(H) 662-588-9011
philene@tecinfo.net

University

Dr. Levenia Maxwell-Barnes
510 Highway 3
Moorhead, MS 38791
(H) 662-246-5807
lbarnes@deltastate.edu

Community College

Gayle Greene-Aguirre
324 Old Hwy 49
McHenry, MS 39561
(H) 601-928-9391
gayle.greenaguirre@mgccc.edu

MPE State Office

P.O. Box 22550
Jackson, MS 39225-2550
1-800-523-0269 or 601-355-5517
FAX 601-355-5519
mpe@mpe.org

Executive Director

Judy Rhodes
554 S. Deerfield Dr.
Canton, MS 39046
(C) 601-927-8280
judy@mpe.org



E-MAIL ADDRESSES FOR MPE OFFICE PERSONNEL

Judy Rhodes (Executive Director) judy@mpe.org
Stephanie Miller stephanie@mpe.org
Betsie Moore elizabeth@mpe.org

MPE AREA DIRECTORS

Baird, Bobby

192 Baird Road
Batesville, MS 38606-8343
Phone: 662-563-8207
E-mail: gen04@bellsouth.net

Pair, James

10110 Sandelwood Lane
Philadelphia, MS 39350
Phone: 601-656-9155
E-mail: jpair@mississippi.net

Boyd, W. G.

P.O. Box 3435
Mississippi State, MS 39762
Phone: 662-323-4075
E-mail: WGBOYDJR@aol.com

Sills, Billy D.

P.O. Box 53
New Hebron, MS 39140
Phone 601-694-2121
1-877-574-2136
E-mail: bdsills@telepak.net

Bryant, Teresa

141 St. Francis Street
Biloxi, MS 39530
Phone: 228-432-8336
tbryant@cablone.net

Swanson, Carolyn

P.O. Box 22550
Duck Hill, MS 38925
Phone: 662-565-7250
E-mail: haddonswan@yahoo.com

MPE has a NEW WEBSITE! Easy to Use - Convenient - Fast!

go to www.mpe.org

UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP, JOIN, OR RENEW ONLINE!



Executive Director
Judy Rhodes

All articles not otherwise signed are staff written. Permission to reproduce material appearing in MPE Journal must be obtained from MPE headquarters. The Mississippi Professional Educators assumes no responsibility for the opinions or points of view expressed by contributors to MPE Journal unless statements have been authorized by action of the Association. MPE endorses no item or service other than those under the auspices of the Association. MPE Journal is a trademark of MPE.

MPE Journal is published three times annually by the Mississippi Professional Educators, Judy Rhodes, Publisher.

MPE Offices:
629 N. Jefferson Street
Jackson, MS 39202
P.O. Box 22550
Jackson, MS 39225-2550
(601) 355-5517
1-800-523-0269
FAX (601) 355-5519
mpe@mpe.org
www.mpe.org

Third class postage paid at Jackson, MS.

**SEND US YOUR NEWS AND
PHOTOS!**

**mpe@mpe.org, or mail to:
MPE • P.O. Box 22550
Jackson, MS 39225-2550**

CONTENTS

MPE Contact Information	2
MPE Columbus/Lowndes Chapter Awards Scholarship	4
2007 MPE Scholarship Winners	5
How Assessment Promotes Literacy in Children	6-7
PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE from Dr. Stacy Reeves	8
PRESIDENTS MESSAGE from Dennis Silas	9
Our Superbowl Trip!	10-11
Lieutenant Governor Candidates' Questionnaire	12-15
Mississippi Community College's Drop-out Recovery Initiative	14
MPE Member wins State's VFW Award	15
From the Desk of the Executive Director, Judy Rhodes	16
First Annual Mel Buckley/MPE Scholarship Awarded	17
Meet Your Board of Directors	18-19
Sudduth Elementary Teacher receives State VFW Award	21
Constructivism for Every Classroom	22-23
MPE Member Benefits	24

MISSISSIPPI PROFESSIONAL EDUCATORS



**Get next year's
membership free!**

Recruit 5 new
members this year
and next year's
membership is free!

For more information call (800)523-0269
or e-mail mpe@mpe.org

COLUMBUS/LOWNDES LOCAL MPE CHAPTER AWARDS SCHOLARSHIP

The Columbus/Lowndes County Local Chapter of Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) recently awarded a \$500 scholarship to Ms. Anna Burris of Columbus.

Ms. Burris is a graduate student at Mississippi University for Women, where she is pursuing a graduate degree in Speech Pathology. Ms Burris earned an undergraduate degree in Special Education at Mississippi State University.

The scholarship is offered each year by the Columbus/Lowndes Local MPE Chapter to undergraduate or graduate children of Columbus/Lowndes Local MPE Chapter members. The scholarship award is based on student MPE membership, academic performance, letters of recommendation, and potential to become an outstanding educational professional.

Ms. Burris is the daughter of Randy and Marilyn Burris of Columbus. Ms Burris' Mother, Marilyn Burris, is an MPE member and a teacher at New Hope Elementary School, Lowndes County School District.

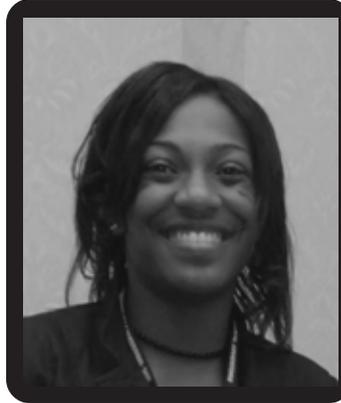


MPE Scholarship Winners for 2007



**JOHNNY
BENEFIELD**

Mississippi State University; President's Scholar; Senior Certified Engineering Technician for the Dept. of Transportation; member of the Bulldog Club.



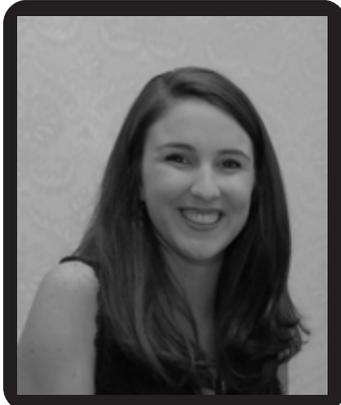
**VANDRA
BRUMFIELD**

Delta State University; Dean's List and National Honors Society; member of Student Government Association at DSU; Program Chairman for Miss DSU Pageant Board.



**NAOMI E
DEVAULT**

Belhaven College; Dean's List; Presidents List; enjoys Missionary work; active in Children's Ministries.



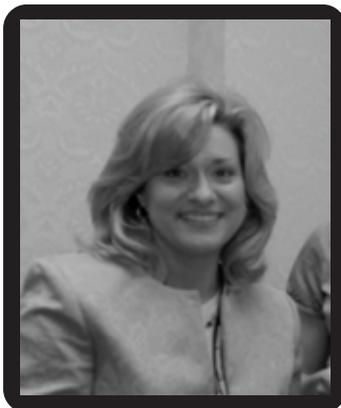
LEANN PALMER

Mississippi College; Dean's List; student recruiter for the MC Admissions office; member of the Baptist Student Union's Journey Team; Secretary/Treasurer of Kappa Delta Pi.



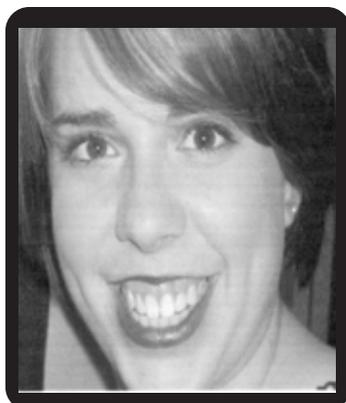
**SANDRA
GILLESPIE**

Mississippi University for Women; 2004 Dean's List; 2005 College of Education and Human Sciences scholarship.



**CYNTHIA GWYN
SMITH**

William Carey University; Dean's List and President's List; selected to be in the Honors Program at WCU; member of Phi Delta Kappa.



**ASHLEY
HEWITT**

Millsaps College; Dean's List; Millsaps Presidential Ambassador; Residence Hall Director; Executive Officer of the Campus Ministry Team; member Tri Delta

MPE would like to congratulate our 2007 Scholarship Winners! Each winner was awarded a \$500 check at the annual convention held in March.

How Assessment Promotes Literacy in Children

By Rachel Gibson

Learning to read is a monumental milestone for students today and for years to come. Our society is pivotal along literacy ability and deprives individuals of much if this achievement is not apparent. Teachers are continuously endeavoring to overcome the low reading rate of youths in schools by applying innovative assessment techniques and by utilizing effective evaluation tools to measure and improve literacy skills. This important issue is growing and many scholars are immersing themselves in the study of this dilemma to assist in the needed reform. Authentic assessment in reading is essential for promoting literacy in youths by providing alternatives to traditional evaluation methods.

Cobb (2003-2004) presents an article that clearly defines assessment and evaluation. Assessment is significant in the teaching and learning process. Cobb defines assessment as being the guide to help teachers intervene where it is necessary. The result of assessing students displays their strengths and weaknesses, thus making it clearer to the teacher where the intervention is needed. According to Cobb, evaluation is used towards the end of the lesson and is assigned after reviewing the instruction and assessment. This is the grading portion of the lesson. Cobb offers suggestions to inspecting assessment methods in the article. These methods encourage the teacher to work closely with the administrators to ensure that every aspect of assessment and evaluation is examined. The article also puts emphasis on using the data to better assess students and guide the instruction. If the assessment guidelines are clearly stated to the students, promoting them to succeed in reading will not be as challenging. Students need to know how they are being evaluated in order to produce the desired results.

Assessment, in the classroom, comes in many forms and is implemented in numerous modes to assess a student's progress in a given subject. Pils (1991) also provides unique techniques to help teachers observe and determine what a student has learned in the course of one year. Pils sought a plan to notify parents and administrators of the progress, which had been made by creating a personalized evaluation tool. The article describes the classroom setup and the different types of activities occurring during class time. Pils used journal entries to analyze the students' writing. From these entries, Pils could determine if the child possessed concepts of writing such as syntax, word identification ability, spacing, sentence structure, and grammar. Using the samples of writing made finding strategies to aid the students in their deficiencies easier and more precise to their specific needs. Another evaluation method used by Pils involved simply noting observations of the students. This provided a platform for remediation when strengths as well as weaknesses were identified and discussed. The observations help teachers tackle the problems that were located by the screenings, tests to note if the students are gaining from the intervention strategies, and multiple indicator outcome measures. Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening and Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills are two measures listed by McKenna and Walpole that are used on behalf of Reading First in classrooms today.

In their report, a diagram of assessment-driven reading instruction is given to display the path teachers abide by when screening students in reading skills. Each level of risk has a path with interventions to follow for remediation. This decision-making chart is extremely helpful and accurate in determining and fulfilling a student's needs. McKenna and Walpole point out that simply using these measures is not the same as teaching the assessments. Teachers need to use the data that was gathered on each student to instruct certain material from the assessments that will be given during the evaluation time. If teachers apply the guidelines of programs like Reading First and utilize the data in prepared and efficient ways, then the students' needs should be met and the progress of the students should hasten.

Johnston (2005) shifts the focus of assessment to the social aspect of students in the classroom. Students are socialized by the different types of evaluations of peers and themselves given in the classroom. Literacy is changing in society and students need to be administered assessments that are flexible, pliant, independent, open, and collaborative. The assessments given in the schools during this time must reflect the ideas and views of others as well as knowing how to incorporate them in the present society. He emphasizes the importance of self-evaluation. This idea could project students into a realm of self-assessments and self-critiques to aid in their own evaluations. Johnston points out that students self-assess themselves when they come to the teacher for help. They have admitted that they do not know the skill and have come to rely on the teacher for assistance. The teachers should begin to approach the students with a positive, encouraging attitude to motivate learning. Teachers could design evaluations that have the students assess themselves in a way that gives them control of their own learning. Johnston provides ideas to implement this strategy. Ranking their own work could help students exercise the guidelines they use for their evaluation. He also describes resilience as the ability to push through activities that are challenging to the student. Students can become discouraged and could potentially give up in a situation that is tougher than normal. Johnston states that students should be taught resilience to keep them motivated in the classroom. The learning process is the star of the assessment instead of the performance. Ability is in all students, but it differs in levels. The process of learning is detrimental in deciding if the student has mastered the skill or needs re-evaluation. Performance is an additive bonus when assessing students. Next, Johnston discusses the term, reciprocity, which is the ability to evaluate what one has learned by suggesting improvements and asking questions. Partaking in these evaluations helps the student better assess what they have just learned. The common assessment forms do not expand reciprocity. Johnston states that asking a student about what he or she has learned and what modifications could be made increases reciprocity by turning the focus to the process of learning. He concludes by highlighting the importance of resilience and reciprocity in students by focusing mainly on the path to learning and not only the ability and performance. Evaluation and assessment are the sole

indicators of student progress in the classroom environment. If teachers could better define what that means to the students, then they would be more successful in attaining the desired goals. Promoting literacy in youths does not only begin with assessment techniques, but it involves many different aspects to ensure that learning has occurred and the expectations of the students are defined. Cobb (2003-2004) states that students must know the explicit expectations of the instruction of their teachers to be able to elicit the wanted outcomes. This will aid in encouraging the students to try harder for success in reading. If they know exactly what is expected, they will be less likely to fail or get discouraged from confusion.

McKenna and Walpole (2005) offer the Reading First idea that provides adequate measures of reading as well as intervention strategies to update a student's reading skills. This program, like many others, strives to promote literacy in children. Pils (1991) displayed situations where observations and self-evaluations were not only helpful, but also critical in determining a child's reading readiness. These assessment ideas were unique to the individual and accelerated the student's reading skills.

Skillings and Ferrell (2000) selected student ownership as a key ingredient in assessing students' reading skills. They emphasized the importance of including the students in the rubric-designing process. This helped the students familiarize themselves with exactly what was expected of them. Reading was promoted through the inclusion of the students in their assessment. Johnston (2005) stressed the ideas of

resilience and reciprocity in evaluations to promote literacy in youths. These phenomena move the focus from the ability and performance to the process of learning. Strategies to learning better are the foundation of retention in literacy. How the student learns to read is much more important than just learning to read. Providing an authentic assessment in the classroom is necessary for encouraging literacy and reaching out to all types of students by simply supplying an alternative to traditional forms of evaluation.

References

Cobb, C. (2003-2004). Effective instruction begins purposeful assessments. *The Reading Teacher*, 57(4), 386-388.

Johnston, P. (2005). Literacy assessment and the future. *The Reading Teacher*, 58(7), 684-686.

McKenna, M. C., & Walpole, S. (2005). How well does assessment inform our reading instruction? *The Reading Teacher*, 59(1), 84-86.

Pils, L. J. (1991). Soon anofe you tout me: Evaluation in a first-grade whole language classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 45(1), 46-50.

Skillings, M. J., & Ferrell, R. (2000). Student-generated rubrics: Bringing students into the assessment process. *The Reading Teacher*, 53(6), 452-455.

YOUR LOCAL NEWS AND EVENTS ARE IMPORTANT. FEEL FREE TO SHARE.
Send your news and photos to MPE • mpe@mpe.org • P.O. Box 22550 • Jackson, MS 39225-2550

Purvis Elementary School Library-Media Specialist wins Award

Mrs. Josie Roberts, Purvis Elementary School Library-Media Specialist, received the 2006 Carroon Apple Award, sponsored by the Mississippi library Association. The MLA School Libraries Section selects and presents the Carron Apple Award for the purpose of recognizing outstanding accomplishment in the field of school library media services.

Mrs. Roberts was one of three from Mississippi to be added to the American Library Association and the Association for Library Trustees and Advocated 2005 National Advocacy Honor Roll that is awarded once every five years.

With the leadership of former Senator Jim Beam, Mrs. Roberts lead a statewide effort to secure legislation for every child in Mississippi to receive the services of a certified public school librarian. Mrs. Roberts became a National Board Certified Teacher in Early Childhood through Young Adulthood/Library Media in 2003. She has been a member of MPE for the last 18 years.





PAST PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE DR. STACY REEVES

Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it. Autograph your work with excellence.
(Author Unknown)

I would like to thank each of the 7800+ members in the Mississippi Professional Educators for this wonderful year as your President. As my year as being your MPE president closes, you can be assured that Dennis Silas will lead this organization to even greater heights that we have conquered in the past. Our Executive Director, Judy Rhodes, will also continue to lead our group to higher levels of professionalism and leadership. Your Board of Directors, Area Representatives, School Leaders, and Office Staff are available to help you.

I want to leave you with a positive word of encouragement. Teachers are authors, designers, illustrators, leaders, speakers, motivators, and we wear countless other hats. We are craftspeople and artists who create new works of art everyday. There is no limit to what we can do when we are motivated and when we desire a certain outcome or certain results. Teachers are no less than amazing. May you be inspired to be amazing and to autograph your work with excellence.

Dr. Stacy Reeves
MPE Past President

Interested in earning a free MPE membership?

Simply recruit 5 members to join in a years time and your next year's membership is free!
Recruit 6 or more members and you will earn an additional \$10 per member.

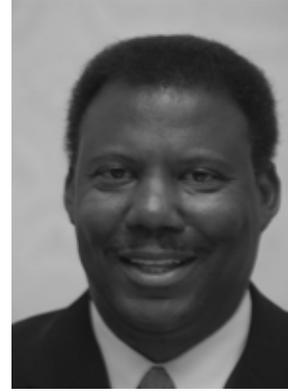
Call or e-mail us and tell us

YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A BUILDING REPRESENTATIVE
and we will send you a packet to get you started!

call us at (800)523-0269 or e-mail stephanie@mpe.org

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

DENNIS SILAS



A quote by John Dewey says, “What the wisest parent wants for his own child, that must the community want for all of its children.” This belief has resounded for over a hundred years in educational philosophy and today serves as one of the cornerstones in the beliefs of Mississippi Professional Educators - as the first of eight Principles of MPE is, “The welfare of students must be placed above all other considerations. Our top priority is the education of children.” As your MPE president I applaud the work of Mississippi’s teachers, administrators and support staff toward fulfilling this ideal for every child in our state. Teachers may be under paid and under respected, but I have never heard a teacher say they are overworked. The teachers of Mississippi have the attitude of tell me what I need to do, train me how to do it, then get out of the way and let me accomplish it. With this as the prevailing attitude in Mississippi, our students will be prepared for success each time the bar for educational excellence is raised and in short order our state will move from near the bottom nationally for student achievement to near the top.

MPE has over 7,800 members including teachers, administrators and non-certified staff from kindergarten to graduate school level. Yet, far too many educators have no membership in a professional association. I encourage our members to invite their co-workers to join MPE. The benefits and rewards are considerable and membership is open to certified and non-certified employees as well as retirees and college students studying to become educators. Recent improvements in the MPE web page have made joining very convenient. The application can be completed online by going to www.mpe.org and the reasonable dues can be paid by check, bank draft, and Paypal.

Admirable goals have been set for MPE for the upcoming year. We look forward to increasing the membership and expanding the already great member benefits even more. This will be possible because of the quality leadership provided by the MPE Board of Directors and the hard work of our executive director, Judy Rhodes, and her staff. Our outgoing president, Stacy Reeves, set a great example for me to follow. I feel confident that I will meet the challenges before me as MPE president because I will be working with a fantastic past president, board of directors and executive director.

As we start a new school year, my wish is that all will have a safe and successful school year and that the year ends with Mississippi’s children closer to our vision of educational excellence for them.

Dennis Silas
MPE President

OUR SUPERBOWL TRIP

by Sally Ann and Skipper Jones

Wow the Super Bowl trip was GREAT !!!

I am very glad I once purchased some software from AcademicSuperstore.com and got on their email list to find out about this contest - and then entered it. I never dreamed at first that there was even a possibility of winning - but it feels great.

Thank you AcademicSuperstore.com and thanks to ticketcity.com who sold the package to AcademicSuperstore and made many of my arrangements - and thanks to all who encouraged and helped us make this wonderful trip !!!

Our trip to Super Bowl XLI ...

We got up very early Saturday morning to load the car and head for the airport. In the dark as I was loading the car a neighbor from across the street was outside and he offered to take Sally Ann's place if she did not want to go - but she said she felt fine and did want to go... We did not get a lot of sleep the night before - lots of final packing, making sure we had tickets for plane, hotel reservation, Super Bowl tickets, etc. We got to the airport and checked in with no problem. Tim took us to the airport - for some reason we did not have a large crowd seeing us off - it was only 6 a.m. when we checked in. Flight to Atlanta was great - took 42 minutes in the air to cover the 350 miles. We had a little layover in ATL - we did some window shopping, ate breakfast then headed for next plane - this was a 767 (has 7 rows of seats). Sally Ann sat by the window - view was great

once we got near Miami - we had a wonderful view of Key Biscayne. This was a much longer trip - it took 1 and 1/2 hours in the air to get from ATL to MIA. David Allen's cousin, Brent, met us at the airport - took us to check in at the hotel, gave us a quick tour of some of the area then took us to supper (paid for by another friend) at the Rusty Pelican restaurant. It was fantastic - the view was great from the Rusty Pelican. I had a wonderful steak - Sally Ann opted for seafood. We did quickly learn a couple of things about Miami - when you park there you have to use the valet service - no self parking. There is a \$4 fee tips not included the sign says. When you go to the restroom there is someone in there handing you a paper towel expecting a tip. This country boy from the South (btw - Miami is not part of the South - it is New York City South) - learned that they expect the rich (they missed it with us) tourist to hand out lots of money in the form of tips.

We tried to go to South Beach so Sally Ann could get a tattoo at Miami Ink - actually we really did try to go to South Beach where lots of Super Bowl activities were going on, but traffic was unbelievable - we got almost a mile from the action, saw no parking, saw lots of folks walking (and it was still over a mile) so we decided to pass - we were actually very tired anyway, so we asked Brent if it was okay just to take us back to the hotel. He was a great host. There is no parking at the hotel - if you bring a car you get valet to park - \$20 per night plus tip - also at the hotel you tip bag boy, tip the concierge for help, tip the people who bring you ice, tip the maid, in transit tip the cab driver, tip the shuttle driver (at least the ones who get you where you are supposed to go). I have to admit - I did avoid some tip situations.



We were not sure how we were going to get to and from the Super Bowl. Taxi was an option but we knew it would be expensive plus we were not sure how hard it would be to get one to come back. Somewhere within a few miles of the hotel was a tri-county passenger rail that could take us a few blocks from the stadium - again we were not sure where it was, how hard it would be to catch it or how hard it would be to get back to the hotel AND we did not want to have to try to walk a few unknown miles in the late night. We asked the hotel if they had a shuttle - their sister hotel, the Westin Diplomat Resort and Spa did have one. We could take the shuttle free from our hotel - the Diplomat Country Club and Spa to the Westin, then take that shuttle - it cost \$200 for the two of us to ride it. MUCH more than we planned to spend, but we were assured that it would get us there and back safely - we could be assured that we would not get stranded at the stadium BUT ... more to come on that. (con't next page)

We got on the shuttle at 3 p.m. - it took 2 hours to get to the stadium, should be less than 30 minutes normally. There was no traffic control by local law enforcement - they were too busy escorting celebrities. The road into the stadium area was two lanes. It often turned into 4 with both shoulders being used at times and cars trying to change lanes often to jockey for the best position. As we got closer you could see many abandoning their cabs, friends, buses, etc. and walking the last couple of miles.

When the bus finally got to the correct parking lot - it let us out. This was on the extreme north east end of the parking - our tickets were on the South side of the stadium. By the time we got to our seats the pre-game show with Cirque du Soleil was over. We did get to see Billy Joel sing the national anthem. Our seats were GREAT. Lower level -17 rows up - corner seating - just the perfect height. There was a light rain while we were in line to go through security. We had to go through a metal detector, get a pat down, bags checked if any - loose any water or other dangerous items, and then proceed to find our seats. It rained practically the whole time - sometimes light sometimes heavy (good reason to put Super Bowl in domed stadiums). We did not mind the rain - WE WERE AT THE SUPER BOWL. We were rooting for the Colts - Peyton Manning and Coach Tony Dungy. We were outnumbered. Someone said that 70 % of those attending were pulling for Bears - that became obvious near the end of the game as the stadium was less than half full when the final gun went off. It was great for a historian (i.e. me) to be at this historic game - two great strongly Christian coaches — Archie's little boy, Peyton, quarterbacking the champs, 2nd most watched Super Bowl ever on TV - 3rd most watch TV show ever. Praise the Lord for Coach Dungy and Coach Smith and their influence on millions.

Half time show was tremendous. It was amazing to see them set up and take down so efficiently and quickly. We were part of it by changing "we will we will rock this place til the wheels come off" and later holding the little flashlight that was included in a pocket at our seats (we even got to keep the seat cushions). We were looking hard for free souvenirs. Those are great.

The game went like we hoped - but when the final gun went off and the confetti settled we struck out for our bus - we had a very long way to go and did not want to take a chance of getting left - they concierge assured us we would not be, but we knew we would likely be among the last - most of the bus were Bears fans and/or on the North side of the stadium. It was a long walk and it was raining. When we got to the parking lot we searched but did not see our bus - they had given us an emergency number - the driver's cell phone- so we called.... and we called.... and we called... never an answer. The whole story is much longer but eventually we flagged a cab and got back. The hotel paid for the cab and is "investigating" the rest of the story...

The concierge also gave us information on getting a shuttle to the airport - that one worked well. The hotel was unbelievable, beds some of the most comfortable we have ever slept in, view that was extremely nice - (the view from our balcony was of the golf course at the hotel - and it was done beautifully - everything about the hotel was wonderful (except that one slip up of leaving us abandoned at the Super Bowl).

The trip home went fine - we were delayed taking off for two hours because of heavy air traffic - that was the longest I have ever been on a plane - and most of it was on the ground. We were afraid we would miss our connecting flight, but we made a bee line to our concourse and made it just in time. The attendants were super nice - gave us extra water and coke - very friendly . All flights were very smooth. I did notice it took longer to get from ATL to GPT than the other way - took 57 minutes to get back. Susanne met us at the airport.

IT WAS QUITE AN EXPERIENCE - IT WAS WONDERFUL !!!

Then we come back to the real world and our concrete floors, broken fence, unfinished repairs,- and very grateful to have them. The respite was fantastic - we have been blessed.

Thank you, Thank You, Thank You for all thoughts, prayers, and encouragement. It did mean a lot to us. We really needed it.

\$500 SCHOLARSHIP

COLUMBUS/LOWNDES LOCAL CHAPTER

APPLY SUMMER/FALL, 2007
AWARDED SPRING, 2008



ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:

CHILDREN OF LOCAL CHAPTER MEMBERS

EDUCATION MAJORS

UNDERGRADUATE OR GRADUATE STUDENTS

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

W.G. BOYD, AREA DIRECTOR

P.O. Box 3435

MS STATE, MS 39762-34535

WGBOYDJR@aol.com

(662)323-4075

Lieutenant Governor Candidates' Questionnaire

QUESTION

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER

Phil Bryant

Will you vote in favor of and support the full funding of MS Adequate Education Program on a consistent basis?

YES

Governor Barbour has said this is a priority for our state. I will work to fully fund MAEP now and in the future.

Will you vote in favor of and support returning the funding of our Universities to an adequate level?

YES

We cannot continue to increase tuition. I have two children in college and this growing expense will soon allow only the privileged to attend college. We must look at options to address the problem of rising tuition including cutting waste and ensure the schools are student centered.

Will you vote in favor of and support the "Mid-level Phase-in" funding for our Community Colleges?

YES

Mid-level Phase-in is not too much to ask for the best value in education. As a community college graduate, I realize that most of us in a blue-collar world can only reach our potential

Will you vote in favor of and support establishing a comprehensive early childhood education program (Pre-K) in Mississippi?

I would support a pilot program to use existing systems such as Head Start or other federally funded day care centers. We must determine an overall cost of the program. Many private centers now exist that may be certified for public education. I am not in favor of adding universal early childhood education to the public school system.

Will you vote in favor of and support establishing the "drop-out recovery program" in our Community Colleges?

YES

We must stop the drop-out rate. We, at the Department of Audit, have been developing our "early warning" system to identify children who begin to miss class for multiple days and alert parents and attendance officers.

The Mississippi Professional Educators believes all educators should conduct themselves as professionals and be treated as professionals. Will you vote in favor of and support legislation that supports this concept?

YES

We should make certain any offense against children by a school employee should be forwarded to administrators who do the hiring. We must have competent teachers who protect and honor our children.

Mississippi Professional Educators

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER

Charlie Ross

YES

I am proud we were able to fully fund MAEP in 2007, a year earlier than we thought we would be able to do so. Because we did the hard work to balance the budget, we did it with recurring revenue, which will enable us to fully fund the program going forward.

YES

Our state universities are vital to our future workforce. During the Musgrove years, our universities were starved to feed other programs. We have done much to correct this problem during the past four years, but our universities need additional increases in funding to compensate for the lean years. I will fight as Lt. Governor to make sure our institutions of higher learning receive the funding increases necessary for them to be affordable and excellent centers of learning.

YES

Just like with our state universities, community colleges were starved. Community Colleges need substantial increases in funding growing forward, and the "Mid-level Phase -in" is a goal I will work to achieve.

I support early childhood education, but we do not need to add another grade level. Many children are in daycares that already provide early education before they reach the age where they can attend public schools.

YES

Our drop-out rate is too high in Mississippi. We should do whatever we can to make sure that our children stay in school. I would like to implement a program that will provide a technical route for students as early as their junior year in high school. I believe that this will keep students who aren't as interested in academics, and more interested in things like electricity, plumbing, carpentry, mechanics, and so forth, in school and moving towards a professional career that they will thrive in.

YES

Teachers are professionals and should behave and be treated as such. Teachers are looked up to and should be admired by students. Unprofessional behavior in the classroom or outside of the classroom for that matter should be looked down upon. After all, teachers are molding the minds of young people, and should be held to the highest of standards.

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER

Jamie Franks

YES

I have been a strong advocate for fully funding the MAEP every year and not just during election years. This issue is the cornerstone of my campaign. I have made this point and hammered it home in virtually every speech, appearance and debate I have taken part.

YES

I believe the money is there if we make it a priority. I am dismayed at the recent tuition hikes, which are a direct result of the Legislature not funding our universities at the level which they are needed. I favor strong consideration of using a portion of the \$10 million surplus to roll back recent tuition hikes.

YES

I believe the "mid-level" plan is a good one. It was well conceived and it is practical and possible. The plan would allow consistency of growth in community college budgets as the K-12 and University budgets increase.

YES

Not only do I support establishing a comprehensive early childhood pre-K education plan, at the June 12th Ms. Department of Education Lt. Gov.'s Debate, I went on record as supporting mandatory kindergarten in public schools.

YES

I believe it is our responsibility to do all we can to not just prevent the increase in our drop-out rates, but to recover drop-outs and bring them back into the educational system.

YES

I will look favorably at proposed legislation recommended by the MPE to insure that our teachers and educators are treated with dignity and respect.

(con't next page)

Lieutenant Governor Candidates' Questionnaire (continued)

QUESTION	CANDIDATE'S ANSWER
<p>Will you vote in favor of and support legislation that will provide consistent support for facilities for all levels of education, including a fair and equitable renovation and repair program for our Universities and Community Colleges?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Phil Bryant</p> <p>YES However, I will continue to demand accountability. Whenever possible, such work should be properly advertised and all bidding laws must be followed. We must also hold contractors accountable for inadequate repair work.</p>
<p>Will you vote in favor of and support legislation that will strengthen our Administrator Preparation programs for our K-12 system?</p>	<p>YES I have advocated a college degree required for elected school board members and appointed superintendents. We should offer continuing education and training for both.</p>
<p>Will you vote in favor of and support the non-mandatory legislation that will provide planning assistance and incentives for school districts to consolidate where feasible?</p>	<p>YES We should have a "unit" system where administrative duties and purchasing are consolidated. I would not support the closing of any schools or relocation of students. We should encourage voluntary consolidation of administrative programs whenever possible.</p>

MISSISSIPPI COMMUNITY COLLEGE'S DROP-OUT RECOVERY INITIATIVE

by Wayne Stonecypher
Director of Community College Board

Background/Need

A high school education is essential preparation for today's world, yet far too many young people are beginning their adult lives without a high school diploma. According to SREB figures, every year, almost one-third of all public high-school students and one-half of minority students fail to graduate with their class. Many of these abandon school with fewer than two years remaining toward their diplomas.

You have probably read of famous and successful people who are high school dropouts. The group includes Pierce Brosnan (actor), Pearl Bailey (singer), Glen Campbell (singer) and many more. These people somehow found a way to have successful careers without the most basic of educational degrees. However, the list who have quit high school and met a dead end is much longer.

Mississippi is not alone when it comes to young people leaving high school without a diploma. Statistically, many

Mississippi counties fall below national measures in key adult economic indicators. One of the primary measures of a workforce's potential is educational attainment; currently, more than 27% of the state's population lack a high school diploma or GED, compared to the national average of one-fifth. Understandably, these statistics are viewed as negative factors for businesses and industries considering locating in the region and are a major cause for concern.

The U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics continues to forecast a loss of manufacturing jobs. As jobs exit our state, it is imperative to transition these workers to high-tech and high-wage advanced job skills. Unemployment rates and high availability of skilled positions have led many employers and workforce development professionals to conclude Mississippi is not suffering from a labor shortage, but rather a skills shortage. Since 1990, the demand by industry for high-skilled labor has increased, but skills surplus ratings in the majority of the counties throughout the region have declined. Negative postings in skills surplus are a strong indication that Mississippi must raise the educational and skill level of the workforce if it is to be a major player in the global economy.

Research indicates that Mississippi has around 41,000 to 42,000 students enrolling in the first grade each year.

(continued page 22)

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER

Charlie Ross

I agree that there must be sound and adequate structures and facilities for our young people, and I will work to achieve this goal.

YES

We need to have the best and brightest administrators in our school districts. Administrators should and must have proper preparation before they begin managing a system that is responsible for molding the minds of young Mississippians.

YES

If there are school districts in our state that would like to consolidate they should be allowed to make that decision. There is no doubt that there are unnecessary school districts in the state of Mississippi, and many of these school districts drain valuable taxpayer dollars that could be put into the classrooms.

CANDIDATE'S ANSWER

Jamie Franks

I believe that one of the biggest and most unfortunate results of the education fund being cut on all levels over the past years is the deterioration of facilities and the slow growth and construction of much-needed new facilities.

YES

I believe there is a critical shortage of well-prepared administrators.

YES

Only if the legislation is *non-mandatory*. I believe local districts should decide how they want to approach the issue of consolidation. I do not believe it should be a matter decided by the state.

YES

MPE Member named VFW Teacher of the Year

Deannie Forbes, Special Education Teacher at Fifth Street Junior High School, won the VFW 2007 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, for grades 6-8.

With over 26 years of experience in Special Education, she has taught classes from Preschool through ninth grade. All 26 years she has been at West Point School District, teaching at every school in the district except WPHS-South Campus.

Ms. Forbes says teaching special education is a challenge for her as well as her students. "I know they (students) have problems to start with and I have to figure out how to fix them," said Forbes.

Besides teaching, she has been very active throughout the community and school system. Forbes has been the Director of the Special Olympics since 2004, and is a member of Autistic Awareness Parents. She has been a member of MPE since 1980.

The VFW Teacher of the Year award is awarded to the teachers who regularly teach citizenship education topics and promote America's history, traditions, and institutions effectively.



Forbes is presented a check by Larry and Mary Stafford with the Lowndes County Post 4272, for winning the VFW Teacher of the Year, with Fifth Street Junior High Principal Alvin Taylor.

FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



We owe a special thanks to Dr. Stacy Reeves in serving as our President for this past year. Stacy has given many hours of her time to improve and help our organization move forward. She continually ranks at the top for recruiting new teachers for MPE. As Stacy moves to the position of “Past President”, Dennis Silas will be serving as President for this year. Dennis is a long-time member of MPE and has served as a teacher, principal and superintendent in our k-12 system. He has exhibited tremendous leadership in serving on our board for six years. I look forward to working with Dennis as we move forward.

I am excited to inform you of new benefits for MPE members that are now effective. At no cost to you, AIG our liability carrier has agreed to provide Identity Theft Coverage for our members. Identity theft is the fastest growing financial crime in America. As a member of MPE, if you are a victim, AIG will provide income protection, expense reimbursement, identity restoration services and other losses up to \$10,000. Please refer to the related article in this issue of the MPE Journal.

We have successfully negotiated an agreement with the American Insurance Marketing Services, Inc.(AIMS) to provide optional Long Term Care Insurance for our members. Coverage is designed to preserve financial independence and avoid relying on family or friends to protect savings and investments, to maintain freedom of choice on determining how and where care is received. As a MPE member, you will receive premium advantages, simplified qualification, individual selection of benefits, and extended family eligibility. You will be receiving additional information on this new benefit and also may check the MPE website for more information.

In this issue we have included a questionnaire completed by this year’s Lieutenant Governor Candidates. Please review each candidate’s response to questions as you make your decision on who to support. I encourage you to research all candidates for all offices included in this year’s elections. The “right to vote” is one of our most precious rights. Please participate in the elections on August 7th and November 6th.

As we begin another school year, please feel free to contact our office if we can be of assistance.

Judy Rhodes
Executive Director

****MPE OFFERS NEW BENEFIT****

IDENTITY THEFT COVERAGE

EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 2007 MPE MEMBERSHIP WILL INCLUDE IDENTITY THEFT COVERAGE. IDENTITY THEFT IS THE FASTEST GROWING CRIME IN AMERICA-STRIKING MORE THAN 9 MILLION VICTIMS LAST YEAR ALONE! RESTORING ONE'S NAME AND GOOD CREDIT IS A TIME CONSUMING AND EXPENSIVE PROCESS. WE WOULD LIKE TO HELP EASE THE BURDEN TO MEMBERS WHO FALL VICTIM TO IDENTITY THEFT BY OFFERING THIS COVERAGE AT NO ADDITIONAL COST. IDENTITY THEFT SPECIALISTS ARE ON CALL 24/7 TO HELP GUIDE INDIVIDUALS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF RESTORING THEIR CREDIT.

- *\$10,000 COVERAGE LIMIT
- *CUSTOMER CLAIMS SERVICE -
- *INCOME PROTECTION
- *EXPENSE REIMBURSEMENT
- *IDENTITY RESTORATION SERVICES
- *COMPUTER PHYSICAL/VIRUS COVERAGE

TO REPORT A CLAIM CONTACT:

JASON DERRICK AT ROSS & YERGER INSURANCE
(800)295-2757



Joey Hutto,
Ross & Yerger Insurance

1st Annual Mel Buckley/MPE Scholarship Awarded

In May Joey Hutto with Ross & Yerger Insurance presented the 1st Annual Mel Buckley/MPE Scholarship Award to Kelsey Clayborne, a Tupelo High School graduate who will major in Education next year at Mississippi State University.



The \$1000 scholarship was awarded based on applications submitted by six people this year. A committee selected the very qualified Ms. Clayborne to win the award. The scholarship was founded by Joey Hutto and Ross & Yerger Insurance as a tribute to MPE's former Executive Director, Dr. Mel Buckley. The scholarship is to be awarded each year to a Tupelo High School graduate who will be attending College or Junior College and majoring in Education.

Kelsey is President of Tupelo High School Student Council and holds officer status in Anchor Club, National Honor Society, Shakesperean Literary Society, as well as Habitat for Humanity. The daughter of Julie and Mike Clayborne, Kelsey is an ACT and Rotary Scholar, and has been voted class favorite by her classmates.

2007-2008 MPE Board of Directors



(front, from left) Sonya Swafford, , Candace Moore Ph.D, Christian Graves, Dr. Levenia Maxwell-Barnes, Gayle Greene Aguirre, Judy Rhodes, (rear, from left) Dr. Stacy Reeves, Amy Prisock, Mike Mcneece, Becky Fields, Dennis Silas, Rhonda Travis, Philene Allen, Diane Sellers (not present Dr. Barry Morris)

JOIN. RENEW. ACCESS YOUR ACCOUNT. MPE NEWS. LINKS. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES.

You can now access your MPE account online. Log onto our website - go to member services - enter in you ID# (located on the back of this journal or your latest invoice) and select "locate your password". Once you have logged in with your temporary password, you can select your permanent password by updating your account.

**WANT TO JOIN MPE?
NEED TO PAY YOR DUES?
UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION?**

LOG ONTO OUR NEW WEBSITE TODAY!

Visit us Online!

www.mpe.org

MPE Welcomes our New Board Members



Paul Christian Graves

Christian graduated from Dexter High School in Walthall County in 1993. He received his Bachelor of Science from William Carey College in 1998, and both a Master of Education in Counseling in 2001 and a Master of Education in Administration in 2002 from USM.

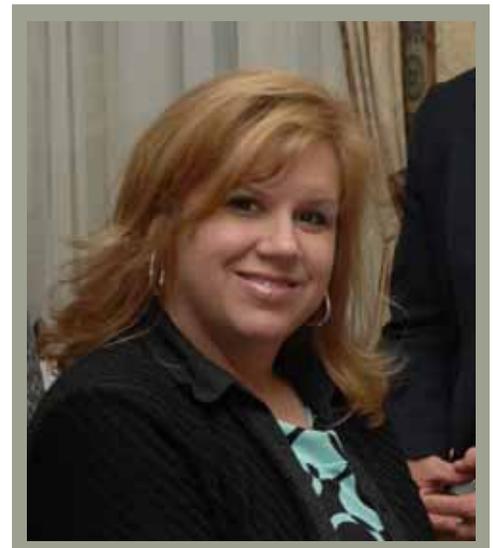
He is presently the Administrative Assistant/ District Test Coordinator at N. Pike High School.

He is the son of Paul and Virginia Graves, both educators. He and his wife Braseye, who is a teacher at Tylertown High School, reside in Tylertown, MS. Christian is an avid golfer.

Sonya Pullen Swafford

Sonya received her Bachelor of Arts in Special Education from Delta State University in 1986 and a Master's of Special Education from DSU in 1987.

She has over twenty years classroom experience and is currently teaching in the Pre-K program at Nailor Elementary School in the Cleveland School District. Sonya is married to Donald Swafford and has two girls, Shelby and Samantha.



Candace T. Moore, Ph.D.

Candace is a resident of Guntown, Mississippi and assistant principal at Saltillo Primary School in Lee County. Dr. Moore earned both bachelor and master degrees from Mississippi College. She earned a Ph.D in Educational Leadership through the University of Mississippi.

She is the daughter of Curtis Thomas and the late Joanne Thomas of Raymond, Mississippi. She is married to Walter H. Moore, III, principal at East Union Attendance Center. They have two children, Kiersten age 17 and Thomas age 10. Both children attend East Union Attendance Center.



Mississippi Community College's Drop-out
Recovery Initiative (cont from pg. 14)

As a result, we have approximately 17,000 students dropping out or leaving the system for other reasons between first grade and when they would be scheduled to graduate from high school. As a result, 26% of our adult population in Mississippi does not have a high school diploma or GED.

The choice to drop out is a dangerous one since high school dropouts are more likely than those who graduate to be unemployed, living in poverty, imprisoned, unhealthy and single parents of children who drop out. Facts associated with the drop-out problem in Mississippi are overwhelming. Consider the following:

- Mississippi has a 21% non-participation rate in our adult workforce. Many of these "drop-outs" are among this number
- Our State has 19.9% of our citizens living below the poverty level (second only to Louisiana 20.3%).
- Roughly 25% of our population on Medicaid, which is another indication of poverty. Studies suggest that the United States would save \$41.8 billion in health care costs alone if young people who dropped out in 2004 were to complete one additional year of education.
- Twenty one thousand Mississippi citizens are incarcerated. Seventy-five percent (75%) of state prison inmates and 59% of federal inmates are high school dropouts. In fact, high school dropouts are 3.5 times more likely than high school graduates to be incarcerated.

An increase in the region's educational attainment levels is an absolute necessity to compete effectively in today's economy, and, based on statistical data, it is obvious that much work is yet to be done to reach economic parity with the rest of the nation. This task will require educational, economic, governmental, business, and industry leaders to pool their talents, experiences, and resources to chart a better course for the state's economic future. If we do not reverse these trends, Mississippi is in store for a very bleak economic future.

Recovery vs. Prevention

Numerous studies have been conducted on preventing students from dropping out of high school. Programs such as focusing on the ninth grade, setting higher graduation rates and making as part of state accountability systems, reforming high schools and communicating stay-in-school messages to students in danger of dropping out and to their families are being implemented. However, few programs are being developed to address those who have already left school. Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges will offer a plan to legislators in 2007 intended address this issue.

The plan as proposed includes the offering of two "**Alternative Adult High School Diplomas**" to Mississippians under the age of 24 who have dropped out of high school.

- Academic Alternative Adult High School Diploma - A high school diploma awarded by the local community or junior college carrying the same weight and privileges as any high school diploma issued by the local secondary school district and approved by the Mississippi Department of Education. In order to obtain this diploma a student shall successfully complete the GED and additional requirements as developed by the Mississippi State Board for Community and Junior Colleges.
- Technical Alternative Adult High School Diploma - A high school diploma awarded by the local community or junior college carrying the same weight and privileges as any high school diploma issued by the local secondary school district and approved by the Mississippi Department of Education. In order to obtain this diploma an student must participate in an adult basic education program, successfully complete an ability to benefits evaluation and complete a post secondary Career or Technical program at a community or junior college.

(con't next page)

The initiative provides for an employable skill within the Technical Alternative Adult high School Diploma. Workforce, Career and Technical Programs can be altered in innovative ways to provide this skills component. Examples of skills training components that have been proposed by the colleges that would serve the **Technical Alternative Adult Diploma** include:

- Production Technical Certification – program consists of four modules resulting in a national certification by the manufacturing Skills Standards Council
- Expanded offerings within the commercial and residential construction offerings designed to fit a 6 week model.
- Expanded offerings in information technology such as Microsoft certifications, designed to fit the diploma schedule and to compliment ABE coursework.

Implementation and success of this Drop Recovery Initiative can only become a reality with legislative support and funding. With this support, Mississippi's Community and Junior Colleges are poised to offer a partial solution to the state's high school drop out problem and help move the state forward educationally and economically.

LONG TERM CARE INSURANCE

*PREMIUM ADVANTAGES

*SIMPLIFIED ISSUE UNDERWRITING FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

*EXTENDED FAMILY ELIGIBILITY

*INDIVIDUAL SELECTION OF BENEFITS

* QUALITY COVERAGE

MPE has endorsed optional Long Term Care Insurance for our members. Coverage is designed to preserve financial independence and avoid relying on family and friends to protect savings and investments, to maintain freedom of choice on determining how and where care is received. Policies will be available through Met Life, John Hancock, and Great American. We will be providing you with more information on this additional benefit, or you may check our website for more information.

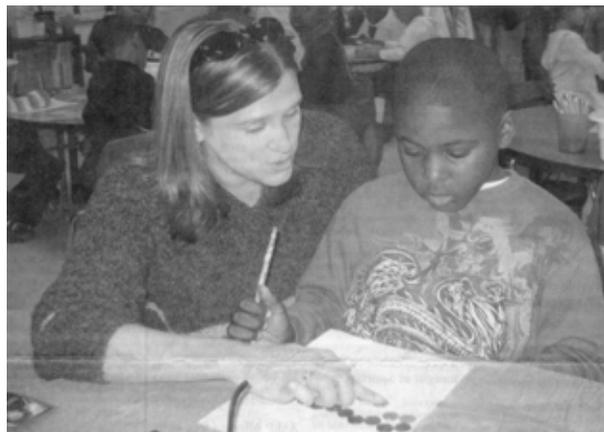
SUDDUTH ELEMENTARY TEACHER RECEIVES STATE VFW AWARD

Kellie Gartman, a Second-grade teacher at Sudduth Elementary school, was selected the VFW teacher for her innovation in teaching young children the skills necessary to be successful, patriotic and productive citizens.

Gartman has been teaching in the Starkville School District for 10 years and is a National Board Certified teacher. She graduated from Tylertown High School and Willaims Baptist College.

Gartman and her husband have no children, but her love for children is evident through her teaching. Continuing her own education, she goes to as many workshops and training sessions as possible, as well as participates in online courses.

Kellie has been a member of MPE since 2002 and served as the Vice President of the Starkville/Oktibbeha County Local MPE Chapter.



Constructivism for Every Classroom

“Let’s declare education a national disaster and get on with our lives” (Smith, 1995).

By Dr. Pokey Stanford and Dr. Patty Ward

This statement reflects the sentiment of many, both in and out of the educational profession. But how will this improve the situation? Will declaring “a national disaster” enable us to identify best practices or what constitutes an excellent learning environment so that we may then emulate such environments? I contend a declaration is not necessary. As educators, our ultimate goal is to change how children experience education so they become life-long learners. We do this by educating and empowering students daily.

As educators most of us know what constitutes a good learning environment, and we know what research supports best practice; but these practices are frequently difficult to find in the K-12 classroom. Occasionally, one can wander into a more progressive classroom to find student centered learning coming alive. However, this should be the norm, not the exception.

For example, research indicates that regardless of what we as teachers decide is important in our lessons, the learner decides what is learned (Poplin, 1988; Brooks & Brooks, 1999). The plethora of brain-based research continues to concur with this premise and provides evidence that learning is controlled by the learner. Why is it then, that although educational professionals know more and more about what constitutes effective teaching, we see less and less student-centered versus teacher-centered learning in our classrooms? We continue to witness that many classroom teachers are doing the opposite of what is known and proven as “best practice”, resorting instead to traditional formats of instruction, such as pure lecture and the teach-the-test mentality. Why, after years of training and reading research, do we fail to embrace what can make a difference?

Get Organized and Go

Beginning class sessions with graphic organizers of what will be covered for that day is an effective method for preparing students metacognitively for what they are about to learn. Certainly graphic organizers have been found to be valuable tools for learners with diverse learning needs (McMackin & Witherell, 2005). Graphic organizers

are a slightly different approach to “waking the brain” for the beginning of class or can be used as a tool for summation. The organizer also can be used for “brain breaks” in which learning students are asked to chunk what they have learned every 10-15 minutes to ensure they have processed and understood the main idea to this point.

Play dough is not just for preschool

K-12 students also are able to use play dough or its like. It is very easy to give students modeling clay and to ask them to construct a model of the solar system or to create a model of DNA. These activities encourage them as learners to think and process information at a higher level of understanding (i.e. beyond a recall of the facts or the Knowledge/Comprehension level of Bloom’s Taxonomy). What about laying Wikki Stix (wax sticks) in the readers to help students keep up or utilizing colored tape to locate parts of speech? By allowing students to interact with materials and utilize techniques that address a variety of learning modalities and engaging in on-going interactions with learning, teachers offer opportunities for students to become more involved in their own

Wonderful World of Wisdom from WWW

In this day and age of the Internet students have numerous opportunities to learn on their own. The problem is that often the Internet is used for basic information gathering versus meaningful learning. Many classroom teachers will not use the internet because every student can not get on at the same time. Consider small group research or even printing information for them to use. (It amazes teachers what students will read from the internet that they will not read from the text book!)

Can’t we all just get along?

The effectiveness of cooperative learning is well-established. Cooperative learning involves a systematic method of having students engage in a small group activity. Cooperative learning involves grouping that holds students accountable for their learning as well as the learning of their group members (Kagan, 1990). Cooperative learning provides students with positive interdependence and individual accountability. Positive interdependence focuses on the group and fosters an attitude of *we* rather than *me*. Individual accountability focuses on the individual and develops the feeling that each person is accountable for contributing to the group project. Both skills are necessary for social development.

Cooperative learning is more than merely grouping students together for an assignment.

For effective cooperative learning to occur, students must develop critical thinking skills, possess the ability to comprehend, apply, synthesize, and evaluate knowledge, and then collaborate with peers as they engage in an activity. Cooperative learning is an especially effective method to use with problem-solving tasks because it encourages the participants to express divergent points of view. This tool also provides a wonderful way to include students with disabilities into the class with meaningful roles. Naturally, the skills involved in cooperation must be taught to learners of all ages as it may be an unnatural process for some students initially. This is true for educators as well.

The field of education may not be where we would like it to be right now, but it is *not* a “national disaster.” We have identified best practices, and we have the ability to make change in the classroom. The adage that we “parent as we were parented” and “teach as we were taught” has never been more relevant. Teacher educators must recognize the importance of engaging in best practices as they instruct future teachers. Constructivism must be evident in the university classroom if we ever expect it to make its way into the K-12 classroom. With such a rich virtual and media enriched environment, the time is right to move away from traditional paper and pencil tasks to more creative outcomes for teachers and students. The nation is calling for change; let us as educational leaders take the challenge and be the catalyst for that change!

References

- Brooks, M.G., & Brooks, J.G. (1999). The courage to be constructivist. *Educational Leadership*, 57, 18-24.
- Kagan, S. (1990). The structural approach to cooperative learning. *Educational Leadership*, 48, 12-15.
- McMackin, M.C., & Witherell, N.L. (2005). Different routs to the same destination: Drawing conclusions with tiered graphic organizers. *Reading Teacher*, 59(3), 242-252.
- Poplin, M.S. (1988). Holistic/constructivist principles of the teaching/learning process: Implications for the field of learning disabilities. *Journal of Learning Disabilities*, 21, 401-416.
- Smith, F. (1995). Let's declare education a disaster and get on with our lives. *Phi Delta Kappan* 76(8), 584-591.
- Nesbit, C.R., & Rogers, C.A. (1997). Using cooperative learning to improve reading and writing in science. *Reading and Writing Quarterly*, 13, 53-71.

MPE IS LOOKING FOR NEW BUILDING REPRESENTATIVES

Over 400 of our 7800 members are Building Representatives. Our organization is growing stronger and larger everyday greatly in part to these dedicated and loyal MPE members.

Did you know that many of our Building Representatives earn free memberships every year by simply recruiting new members? Recruiting as few as 5 new members a year earns you a free MPE membership! Six or more new members and you will receive \$10 per member recruited.

Call or e-mail our office today
and we will get you started!

You will receive a Building Rep Packet
with promotional products,
applications, as well as a special gift for
becoming a Building Representative.

call us: (800)523-0269
e-mail: stephanie@mpe.org
mpe@mpe.org

As a member of MPE you have the following coverages...

PROFESSIONAL LIABILITY PROTECTION OF \$2,000,000

\$20,000 LEGAL DEFENSE

\$10,000 FOR EMPLOYMENT MATTERS

\$10,000 ACCIDENTAL DEATH & DISMEMBERMENT

\$2,500 ASSAULT RELATED PROPERTY DAMAGE

*** New Benefits ***

IDENTITY THEFT COVERAGE

LONG TERM CARE COVERAGE



Feel free to contact us at:

mpe@mpe.org

(800)523-0269

JOIN. RENEW. ACCESS YOUR ACCOUNT. MPE NEWS. LINKS. LEGISLATIVE UPDATES.

You can now access your MPE account online. Log onto our website - go to member services - enter in you ID# (located on the back of this journal or your latest invoice) and select "locate your password". Once you have logged in with your temporary password, you can select your permanent password by updating your account.

WANT TO JOIN MPE?
NEED TO PAY YOR DUES?
UPDATE YOUR INFORMATION?

LOG ONTO OUR NEW WEBSITE TODAY!

Visit us Online!

www.mpe.org



MPE Journal

629 N. Jefferson St
Jackson, MS 39202
P.O. Box 22550
Jackson, MS 39225-2550

PRSR STD
US POSTAGE
PAID
MAILED FROM
ZIP CODE 39205
PERMIT NO. 682