



MPE Journal

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Linda Anglin: MPE Founder

Inside!

2008 CONVENTION

BLUE RIBBON COMMITTEE: Redesigning Teacher Preparation

DROP-OUT RECOVERY

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Executive Director
Judy Rhodes

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Ms. Linda Anglin is honored in this issue of the *MPE Journal* for her many years of commitment to the education of the children of Mississippi through her long time service in MPE. I have known Ms. Anglin for several years and I have witnessed her caring spirit firsthand. The smile on her face and the twinkle in her eyes when she talks about making a difference for children is like a window to her heart. Ms. Anglin would be a great role model for our children. Our children, however, are influenced much more by members of the sports and entertainment community. This is sad!

Many well known sports and entertainment personalities that our children look up to have fallen from grace. There have been allegations of illegal drug use, dog fighting, guns, physical abuse, and cheating. One fallen angel even had to return her Olympic medals for cheating. I am not the world's greatest fan, but I was distraught and disappointed that people who represent themselves as role models were making so many mistakes and not realizing the grave consequences of their actions on their own lives and the lives of our children. It was even more upsetting when I heard one athlete, who has taken millions of dollars by marketing himself as a sports hero, say that he is not a role model. Unfortunately, many of our children see him as such and try to live their lives as he has lived his.

In these tumultuous times, many of our children are faced with stresses and challenges in their lives that my generation would have never imagined possible for children. With the increasing number of dysfunctional families and the unwillingness of many in the sports and entertainment arena to except the responsibility of being a role model, many of our children are getting lost. This is where the school has to step in. For many of our children the school is the only safe and caring place they have. The No Child Left Behind Act sets high standards and accountability for the learning of all children and mandates that 100% of all children meet the standards. As we embrace this philosophy of academic excellence, we must also realize our children must have hopes, dreams, and a belief that attaining their vision is possible. This is what role models provide to children. In the absence of traditional role models, educators must pick up this banner and add it to the many other banners that they carry. This act of humanity will ensure that all children not only meet our rigorous standards, but have dreams, and a belief that will allow them to make good use of the high quality education provided in our Mississippi classrooms.

If we as educators get it right, there will be more Donald Drivers in the future. Donald Driver is a professional football player who played his college ball at Alcorn State University. He is one athlete who has accepted that he is a role model. He has established the Donald Driver Foundation with the goal of "changing homeless families' issues each day with STRONG HANDS that build and strengthen instead of destroy and weaken, with STRONG MINDS that invent new ideas to achieve these goals, and with LOVING HEARTS that overflow with love and compassion." Donald Driver is a symbol of hope for our children, but he couldn't have gotten where he is today without the encouragement, compassion, and dreams that teachers provide to students each and everyday.

The task of delivering the plethora of services that students need to be successful can be daunting. Educators like Ms. Anglin are proof that teachers can meet any challenge without burning out or becoming discouraged if the focus and purpose is doing what's best for children. This is what MPE is all about. This is what it means to be a professional educator. Ms. Anglin, thank you for helping make MPE the professional association that it is today. You are a genuine role model for us all.

Dennis Silas
President, MS Professional Educators



FROM THE DESK OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We have added a part-time professional staff member, Kelly Riley, to the MPE family. As a prior education policy analyst, Kelly will be a great addition to our staff and will assist us in focusing on communication with you as members and will also assist me in representing the organization on policy issues with the legislature and state level education boards. You will find Kelly's contact information in this issue of the Journal and on our website. I encourage you to contact Kelly with suggestions or with questions you may have.

We have been fortunate to be able to add membership benefits recently at no additional cost to you. Those include "Identity Theft Coverage" and "Assault-Related Property Damage". We are excited our insurance carrier has added these. Please review the coverage highlights of these two benefits included in this issue. While these benefits may assist you should you need them, they are limited in the services and benefits provided. We have also negotiated "optional" long-term care coverage for those members interested. If you need more information on these or any other services of MPE, please check our website or call the office.

The MPE Annual Convention has been scheduled for April 12, 2008, at the Jackson Hilton. We have been so fortunate to schedule the nationally respected speaker, Dr. Marilyn Friend. Marilyn is considered "the national expert" for inclusion. Many of you have told me this year how challenging inclusion can be. I am certain Marilyn will share concepts and ideas that will be helpful whether you are an administrator, regular, or special education teacher. CEU's will be offered, so mark your calendar for April 12.

We are so pleased to provide a tribute in this issue to Mrs. Linda Anglin, the founder of the MS Professional Educators. I have been so fortunate to know and work with Linda for a number of years. In my prior work with the MS Department of Education, I worked with the Legislature in regard to K-12 funding issues. Linda was always in attendance at the important meetings and represented MPE so well. She was persistent, but always professional in her battles to improve educational opportunities for our children. Linda set the stage and provided the leadership for MPE to become Mississippi's premier education association. There is no other organization that can offer the quality of services at such a reasonable cost for its members. Thank you Linda!

Judy Rhodes
Executive Director, MS Professional Educators

FY 2009 EDUCATIONAL BUDGET REQUESTS

Mississippi's three governing educational entities submitted their Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 budget requests to the Joint Legislative Budget Committee in September. FY 2009 will encompass the 2008-2009 school year, beginning July 1, 2008, and ending June 30, 2009. FY 2009 appropriations will be made during the 2008 Legislative Session. Approximately \$478 million in additional funding has been requested for education.

K-12

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) requested an increase of \$140 million in state funds for its legislative priorities:

· Full funding of MAEP	\$11 million
· Additional funding for at-risk students	(TBD)
· Pilot pre-kindergarten programs	\$20 million
· Continued funding for high school redesign	\$18 million
· Restoration of diverted teacher supply funds	\$20 million
· Restoration of diverted school building funds	\$20 million
· Teacher pay increase	\$48 million
· Other	<u>\$3 million</u>
Total requested increase over FY 08	\$140 million

Community and Junior Colleges

Mississippi's fifteen community and junior colleges requested \$80 million in additional funding for the following programmatic areas:

· Instruction	\$22 million
· Instructional support	\$2 million
· Student services	\$1 million
· Institutional support	\$12 million
· Physical plant operations	\$7 million
· Program enhancements	<u>\$36 million</u>
Total requested increase over FY 08	\$80 million

Colleges and Universities

Mississippi's colleges and universities requested \$258 million in additional funding for the following:

· Structures	\$99 million
· Education	\$69 million
· Economic development/research	\$12 million
· Service (\$ aid, UMMC, extension services)	<u>\$78 million</u>
Total requested increase over FY 08	\$258 million

Compensation

All three entities requested improved compensation packages for faculty and staff. MDE's \$48 million teacher pay increase includes a 3% increase on the base salary scale, as well as an incremental increase for teachers' years of experience from 25 to 30 years. Community and junior colleges requested \$20 million towards mid-level compensation between that of K-12 and university faculty. Mid-level funding would boost community and junior college salaries from the estimated FY 2009 average of \$47,207 to \$52,519. Although the additional \$258 million referenced above does not include increased compensation, colleges and universities have requested a 5% merit-based raise pool for faculty and staff.

MPE will monitor appropriations during the upcoming legislative session and will keep you updated as to developments.

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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.

Happy Holidays!

from

**The Mississippi
Professional Educators**

2008 SCHOLARSHIPS

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\$500 SCHOLARSHIPS
TO QUALIFIED MPE STUDENT MEMBERS
WHO WILL BE STUDENT TEACHING THIS YEAR OR NEXT



For more information, contact the Dean of Education at your college or university. MPE must receive applications by February 15th, 2008. Scholarship awards will be presented at the 2008 Annual Convention.

Blue Ribbon Committee on Redesigning Teacher Preparation: Navigating the Process in Mississippi

In recent years, there has been tremendous attention given to the quality of education in public schools, not just in Mississippi but across the nation. Often, those of us in higher education have pretended that K-12 was responsible for causing the problems, so K-12 must be responsible for solving them. K-12 has a role, of course; but the reality is that higher education also must be responsible for improving quality in our public schools. It is the responsibility of higher education to train K-12 teachers, prepare K-12 administrators, ensure that K-12 requirements are aligned with postsecondary expectations, and conduct research to improve the processes that take place in all educational environments. Mississippi's university system is taking these responsibilities seriously.

During the fall of 2006, the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL) joined forces with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), the Governor's office, state legislators, and other Mississippi entities to appoint a Blue Ribbon Committee for the Redesign of Teacher Preparation (BRC). State Superintendent of Education Dr. Hank Bounds, State Board for Community and Junior Colleges Executive Director Dr. Wayne Stonecypher, and Commissioner of Higher Education Dr. Thomas C. Meredith worked together to select members to serve on the committee. The 40 diverse committee members include secondary and postsecondary educators, administrators, legislators, business leaders, parents, and representatives of the Governor's office, MDE, and IHL.

The BRC officially kicked off in November with a two-day meeting featuring a presentation by Dr. Lynn Cornett, vice president of the Southern Regional Education Board, who discussed the need for improved teacher education programs from a national perspective. Over the next five months, the committee heard from a number of experts in teacher preparation reform. Dr. Jeanne Burns, associate commissioner for teacher education initiatives for the Louisiana Board of Regents and Governor's Office, shared the lessons Louisiana learned during its initiative to improve teacher quality. Louisiana was rated number one in the nation for its efforts to improve teacher quality by *Education Week*. Dr. Charles Coble, a partner in North Carolina's The Third Mile Group, LLC, and former vice president for policy programs and studies of the Education Commission of the States, discussed economic factors that have forced changes in general education and teacher preparation. He also stressed the importance of partnerships between universities and schools. Dr. William Reaves, executive director of the Center for Research, Evaluation, and Advancement of Teacher Education, shared the Texas model of teacher preparation redesign with an emphasis on linking preparation programs to student achievement in the P-12 school setting. Dr. Reeves drew from the experience he gained as the associate vice-chancellor for public education for the Texas A&M University System, where he was responsible for the design and implementation of a five-year initiative to increase the quality and effectiveness of the A&M System's nine teacher preparation programs. Finally, Dr. Jan Kettlewell, associate vice chancellor of P-16 initiatives at the University System of Georgia, shared information about the role of P-20 councils in teacher preparation.

During these monthly meetings, the BRC also participated in group exercises to describe the members of ideal teacher for Mississippi's schools, to assess the current state of teacher preparation in Mississippi, and to identify the barriers that keep the state from moving from the current state of teacher preparation to the ideal. These exercises enabled the BRC to identify its core beliefs, outline expected outcomes from the



Dr. Lynn House
Assistant Commissioner of Academic
and Student Affairs, MS Institutions
of Higher Learning

redesign process, and suggest recommendations for directly addressing a number of issues related to assessment and accountability, partnerships, program content implementation, and recruitment and retention. In May of this year, the BRC assembled a writing team to make record of the committee's issues, recommendations, and expected outcomes.

The BRC's expected outcomes, which will require multiple years of work to achieve, include teacher preparation programs that have been redesigned to increase the quality and quantity of teachers in the state; an accountability system that links student achievement with teacher education and alternate route programs; the implementation of strategies to improve teacher recruitment; increased teacher retention rates; alignment of certification and licensure requirements with standards and federal mandates; and a stronger link between the two-year and four-year institutions for teacher education students. The BRC laid out more than 50 specific preliminary recommendations to achieve results related to 12 issues.

The preliminary recommendations, as recorded by the writing team, were fully vetted by the BRC as a whole and were then shared with educators and interested persons throughout the state through Town Hall Meetings. The BRC actively solicited feedback on the recommendations during the Town Hall Meetings and through an interactive website (http://www.mississippi.edu/Academic_Affairs1/brc/index.asp) that allowed interested persons to view a video presentation of the recommendations and submit comments. The recommendations were also reviewed with critical entities, such as the Barksdale Reading Institute; the Mississippi Association of School Superintendents; the Mississippi Association of School Administrators; the Mississippi Professional Educators; the Mississippi School Boards Association; the Mississippi Association of Educators; the Mississippi Parent Teacher Association; and the Mississippi Teacher of the Year.

Now armed with recommendations and feedback, the BRC has begun work with national education consultants to develop a detailed plan for redesigning Mississippi's teacher education programs. The BRC has gracefully and expertly accomplished a tremendous feat over the past year, but the real

work of implementation is just beginning. Specifics for program redesign should be in place for the universities by January 2008, and training and program development will take place through May 2008. Faculty preparation and program review will take place during the summer and fall of 2008, and the pilot version of Mississippi's newly redesigned teacher preparation programs will officially be implemented in January 2009.

The educational leaders in Mississippi as well as the dedicated members of the Blue Ribbon Committee are to be commended for recognizing the urgent need for teacher preparation reform in this state and for demonstrating true willingness to work together for solutions.

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CONVENTION KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Saturday, April 12, 2008

Dr. Marilyn Friend

MPE is thrilled to announce that Dr. Marilyn Friend will be the keynote speaker at our 2008 Convention. Recognized as “the national expert” for inclusion, Dr. Friend will be the highlight of our upcoming convention. Below is a brief biography of her work and her experience.

Marilyn Friend, Ph.D., has spent her career as a general education teacher, special education teacher, teacher educator, and staff developer. She is currently Professor of Education in the Department of Specialized Education Services at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro where she teaches coursework on inclusive practices and collaboration among service providers. She also serves on the Board of the Teacher Education Division of the Council for Exceptional Children. She has consulted with school professionals nationally and internationally (more than 1000 presentations and projects in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia) as they collaborate to educate their students, assisting them to form productive and efficient work teams, to learn the best ways to manage awkward or adversarial conversations, and to communicate effectively with parents. Her particular areas of interest include skills for collaboration, co-teaching, inclusive school practices, team building, shared problem solving, interpersonal communication, and conflict and controversy. She is the author of *Special Education: Contemporary Perspectives for School Professionals* (2nd edition) (2008), *Interactions: Collaboration Skills for School Professionals* (5th edition, 2007) (with Dr. Lynne Cook), *Including Students with Special Needs: A Practical Guide for Classroom Teachers* (4th edition, 2006) (with Dr. William Bursuck), and *Co-Teach! A Manual for Creating and Sustaining Classroom Partnerships* (2008). In addition, she is the co-producer on a series of videotapes about collaboration, co-teaching, and inclusion, including *The Power of Two* (2nd edition, 2005), and the author of more than 50 articles on collaboration, inclusive practices, and related topics.



Linda Anglin's Tips

To a new teacher

- Understand your district's rules and regulations
- Stay in close contact with your principal
- Find an experienced teacher in your school to mentor you
- Keep yourself morally clean
- Keep up with current educational issues and subscribe to professional publications

To a new teacher with a problem with an administrator

- Review the situation to identify areas or matters in which you were weak
- Sit down with the administrator and try to resolve the issue between yourselves
- Join a professional organization that provides liability insurance
- If the problem can't be resolved and the teacher is a hardworking professional, he or she should look for another school

Master Teacher of Economics Program

The Mississippi Council on Economic Education projects that at least 400 Master Teachers in Economics (MTE) are needed in Mississippi classrooms in order to implement the new graduation requirements that go into effect with the class entering high school in 2008. For this reason, the Council has partnered since 2004 with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) to provide teachers with intense professional development in economics and financial education via the Master Teacher of Economics Program. Strengthening teacher foundations in economics and providing high quality, grade-appropriate curriculum can enhance students' learning.

There are currently 77 MTE teachers representing 45 school districts throughout Mississippi. Another 30 teachers are currently enrolled in a district-wide initiative in Lamar County. The Mississippi Professional Educators proudly recognizes and congratulates the following members as Master Teachers in Economics:

Deanna Anderson, Gulfport High School, Gulfport
Jerry Beavers, Bailey Magnet High School, Jackson
Marie Carpenter, Poplarville Career Development Center, Poplarville
Catherine Chancellor, South Jones High School, Jones County
Mindi Cook, Northwest Rankin High School, Rankin County
Monique Farrington, St. Martin High School, Jackson County
Elizabeth Freeland Landingham, Holly Springs High School, Holly Springs
Cheryl Goudelock, Magee High School, Simpson County
Henri Grantham, Clarksdale High School, Clarksdale
Brent Long, Stone High School, Stone County
Luther Minor, Plantersville Middle School, Lee County
Bruce Mize, Columbus High School, Lowndes County
Jennie Randle, Weir Elementary, Choctaw County
Krista Russell, Brookhaven High School, Brookhaven
Gary Varsel, J.Z. George High School, Carroll County
Charlotte Walker, Clinton High School, Clinton

The MDE approved the MTE as a State Certificate program and the State Board of Education approved an economics endorsement at its October board meeting. The MTE is a means of secondary social studies and business education teachers earning the endorsement. Teachers who complete the ten MTE class sessions will receive the MTE certificate, as well as a total of 5 CEUs. All of the instruction, text materials, curriculum resources and CEUs are paid for by scholarships supported by the Council and/or local school districts. Financial support for the MTE program is provided by the Mississippi Department of Education, The Armstrong Foundation, AT&T, Citibank Foundation, State Farm Insurance, BancorpSouth and Trustmark.

The Council's most recent MTE class started the first of November through the University of Southern Mississippi Center on Economic Education in Hattiesburg. The Council will accept applications until November 20, 2007, for its 2008 on-line program to begin in January through the Mississippi State Center on Economic Education. For more information, please visit the Council's website at www.mscee.org or phone their office at 601-974-1325.



Cheryl Goudelock,
Master Teacher in Economics
Magee High School, Simpson Co.

The Mississippi Professional Educators also recognizes the following six members who are enrolled in the Master Teacher in Economics Program:

Susan Kemp, Sumrall Middle School, Lamar County
Ellen Mathis, Oak Grove Upper Elementary, Lamar County
Abby Mills, Purvis Middle School, Lamar County
Anna Pickett, Oak Grove Lower Elementary, Lamar County
Julie Richardson, Baxterville Attendance Center, Lamar County
Kelly Soberoski, Oak Grove Primary School, Lamar County



Mindy Cook,
Master Teacher in Economics
Northwest Rankin High School, Rankin Co.

Linda Anglin: Member, Mentor and Main Meddler



“Determined,” “positive,” “professional,” “dedicated,” and “frugal.” All of these are words used to describe Linda Anglin, the founder and first President of the Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE). Linda’s personal business card simply provides the title of “MMM” – an acronym for “Mississippi’s Main Meddler” given to her by her daughter. Linda’s “meddling” has contributed invaluable not only to the MPE, but to thousands of students, teachers, administrators, school boards, parents and communities throughout Mississippi

Born in Turrell, Arkansas, in 1929, Linda’s life has truly been one of service. She grew up in Houston, Mississippi, and began helping others when she was a teenager. Linda sold war bonds and knitted for the Red Cross during World War II. She also taught Sunday School and organized a teen center. While a student at Millsaps College, Linda tutored children at the Bethlehem Center, assisted with vesper services at the Methodist Children’s Home and volunteered at the Veterans Hospital.

As part of her training to become a social worker in a childrens’ home, Linda obtained her teaching certificate. “When I did my student teaching, I got hooked on teaching school,” Linda reports. “I decided that’s what I wanted to do.” Linda began her teaching career at McWillie Elementary in Jackson and spent forty years in the classroom, teaching at Casey Elementary in Jackson after McWillie closed. She counts Charlie Johnson, former director of the Mississippi Educators’ Association, and Bessie Will Gilliland, her principal at McWillie, among her mentors.

Linda and her husband, Joe, have been married for fifty-five years. Although she graduated Cum Laude from Millsaps in 1951, they didn’t marry until he graduated from Mississippi State in 1952. According to Linda, “I told him that I wouldn’t marry him until he finished his education.” They have four children, seven grandchildren and one great-grandchild. Linda stayed at home when the children were young. Cheri, their daughter, followed in her mother’s footsteps and teaches with the Clinton Public School District.

Linda sought to form MPE with the purpose of fostering cooperation among teachers, administrators, school boards, parents and students. She was elected to serve as temporary President at MPE’s first organizational meeting on July 11, 1979, where those present voted to seek alliance with the National Association of Professional Educators (NAPE). Linda quickly set to work obtaining MPE’s Certificate of Alliance with NAPE, as well as our Charter of Incorporation with the State of Mississippi, that same month. When sending Linda the certificate, NAPE President Philip Strittmatter succinctly noted, “You are really a quick worker!”

Linda was – and continues to be – the MPE’s strongest supporter. When leaders of other teacher organizations proposed that another such organization would weaken teachers’ unity on educational issues, Linda quickly invited the other organizations to join MPE! After being elected President at the organizations’ first official meeting in August 1979, Linda coordinated mailings to teachers throughout the state, informing them of MPE and its benefits, including dues of \$20 with professional liability coverage.

“When I first met Linda Anglin I thought she was a sweet, petite, little old grandmother. It didn’t take me long to realize that she was sharp as a tack and had the tenacity of an attack dog. She stood for children and worked tirelessly to help provide the best possible education for them. In her quiet unassuming way, Linda has probably done more behind the scenes, than anyone I know, to effect positive results for public education.”

**- Jeanette Thrash,
MPE President, 1981-1982**

Two of the first people Linda went to visit with were Rea Hederman with the Clarion-Ledger and Mr. Ward with the Jackson Daily News newspapers. Often finding herself the voice of the MPE, she responded to newspaper articles and editorials regarding the organization with the utmost professional and congenial disposition...usually within one to two days of the original article's printing. As recalled by Jeanette Thrash, MPE's second President, Linda was "ready any time of the night or day to put the needs of MPE above those of her own."

"Most independent education organizations have a moving force behind them, but few have a force like Linda Anglin who has stayed with them and worked on their behalf for so long."

**-Mel Buckley
MPE Exec. Director, 1999-2005**

Linda's early activities as MPE President also included working at the state capitol on behalf of the organization. She registered as a lobbyist in January 1980 to "advocate or oppose measures affecting education." She personally delivered MPE materials to legislators, sent them handwritten notes and urged them to take hands-on roles in their local schools. Linda is still remembered for her effective lobbying skills. Governor Ronnie Musgrove, former chairman of the Senate Education Committee, recalls, "Some people have good ideas and no way to get them done. Others know how to get things done, but have no ideas. And then, rarely one comes along who has the vision to make our schools better and then possesses the enthusiasm, the desire and the ability to get things done. Clearly, Ms. Linda Anglin falls in to this category. During my years in public office as a state senator, lieutenant governor and governor, I could always depend on Linda Anglin to have good ideas and more importantly, the passion to get those ideas into law. Mississippi's children are better off because she took the time to make a difference". Senator Jack Gordon, whom Linda recalls "took me under his wings those early years" adds, "She was a loyal member of the Mississippi Professional Educators and she was always so sweet to share her ideas with me."

"When I became an MPE board member and state president she continued to stress "We must always put the children first." Linda's vision for this organization developed into an organization in which the word "professional" has always been the key word in our name. Thank you, Linda, for being instrumental in forming MPE."

**-Teresa Bryant, Area Director
MPE President, 1993-1994**

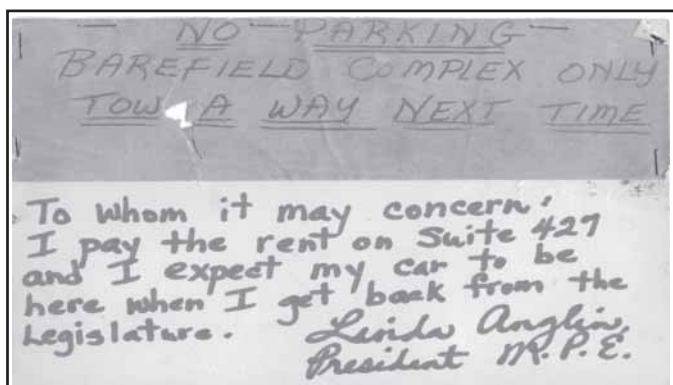
The first people she made contact with at the capitol were Governor William Winter, Lieutenant Governor Brad Dye, Speaker of the House Buddy Newman and President Pro Tem of the Senate S. Alexander. Linda recalls explaining to Speaker Newman that, although they might not see eye-to-eye on all matters, "knock down, drag outs weren't necessary. And if we didn't agree in the end, I'd put him on my prayer list." According to Linda, "Those four men became my friends and I stayed friends with all of them." She regrets not accepting Speaker Newman's invitation to take her grandchildren to ride his train at his home in Valley Park. Brad Dye recalls that Linda was "honest and



Jeanette Thrash and Linda Anglin with Governor William Winter as he signs the Education Reform Act of 1982.

dedicated, especially to children. She was more interested in the children than the teachers. I still have to call her 'Miss Linda.'"

In addressing the Senate and House Education committees that first legislative session in 1980, Linda stated, "I do not consider myself an authority in the field of education, but I do consider myself a dedicated, professional teacher who loves this state and its children." Linda approached her efforts at the capitol with the same determination and spunk as her other efforts on behalf of education. After finding a notice on her car that it would be towed if parked again in the Barefield Complex, Linda left the following handwritten note on her car: "To Whom It May Concern: I pay the rent on suite 427 and I expect my car to be here when I get back from the Legislature." Linda's car was never towed.



Under Linda's leadership, MPE's membership quickly grew from the original three members to more than 400 the first year. MPE held its first statewide meeting on March 10, 1980, at Mississippi College. Early requests for information regarding MPE's purpose and membership were received from Pisgah, Greenwood, West Point and Hattiesburg. Membership grew to approximately 2,500 members by March 1981. Linda was often requested to participate in meetings hosted by educational organizations, agencies or the Legislature on matters impacting education in Mississippi.

Linda's first meeting on behalf of the MPE with Governor Winter in early 1980 established a long relationship between the MPE and Governor Winter, one that was recognized by Governor and Mrs. Winter being awarded the first lifetime membership in MPE in 1983. Linda was invited by Governor Winter to join him and his staff in July 1981 for a planning meeting for the 1982 Legislative Regular Session. This meeting was a seed to the

historic Education Reform Act of 1982 and was only the first of many in which Linda participated. MPE formed a coalition with approximately fourteen other educational organizations to lobby the Legislature in support of improvements such as increased teacher salaries, statewide kindergarten and compulsory attendance laws. Linda encouraged the MPE membership, as well as others, to study and support the Governor's efforts for our state to become competitive both educationally and economically.

When asked what her most rewarding experience with the MPE has been, Linda recalls steps to updating teacher education programs in the early 1980's. MPE included teacher education in its legislative program. Senator Alexander supported the issue and introduced a bill in the Senate to review teacher education programs. However, a House bill did not make it out of committee, thereby killing it for practical purposes. Senator Alexander then had a Senate Resolution passed requiring the Institutions of Higher Learning to review teacher preparation programs. Linda was asked to participate in this review, including a meeting with Dr. Richard Stoltz from North Carolina to discuss needed changes in our state's teacher education programs.

Linda's contributions to the MPE hardly ceased when

It has been my good fortune to have been a friend and admirer of Linda Anglin for a long time. She is one of the most remarkable and dedicated citizens of our community that I have ever known.

No one has been a more faithful supporter of education in our state than she has. As a classroom teacher for many years, she helped shape the lives of countless young people who learned not only from the subjects which she taught but also the example she set.

As a founder and leader of the Mississippi Professional Educators, Linda has been an influential force in the shaping of wise educational policy for our state. In doing that she has been guided by her dedication to placing the interests of our children above everything else.

William F. Winter
Governor of Mississippi, 1980-1984

“Linda is definitely the Founding Mother of MPE. She has been a consistent promoter of professional educators since before the MPE even existed. She probably continues to be our most effective lobbyist ever.”

**-Mike McNeece, Board Member
MPE President, 2001-2002**

Jeanette Thrash succeeded her as President in 1982. Linda continued to contribute innumerable hours on behalf of the organization and sought for several years for the establishment of a Scholarship Committee to assist teachers. She contributed the initial funds and chaired the first Scholarship Committee in 1990, the framework under which we still award scholarships to deserving teachers throughout our state. She continues to contribute to our Scholarship Fund to this day, often via donations in memory of members or their loved ones.

In my prior work with the MS Department of Education, I worked with the Legislature in regard to K-12 funding issues. Linda was always in attendance at the important meetings and represented MPE so well. She was persistent, but always professional in her battles to improve educational opportunities for our children.

**Judy Rhodes
MPE Executive Director, 2005-present**

According to Linda, “I’ve enjoyed life. If you can’t enjoy life, you’re in real bad shape.” Linda says she has learned to say “No” to the many requests she receives for her time in recent years; however, we all know better. She volunteers at her church each Friday with the bulletin and maintains her membership in the Mississippi Retired Teachers’ Association, as well as Delta Kappa Gamma. She enjoys picking her 6th grade grandson up from school each afternoon and overseeing his homework. The first Saturday in November of each year you will find her and other teachers who taught under Bessie Gilliland at McWillie Elementary, attending the annual luncheon that they’ve convened for the last 25 or 30 years. Linda provides everyone with an update of those unable to be present, as she personally phones each member of the group to determine if they will attend. Linda also enjoys class reunions with her remaining classmates from Houston High School’s class of 1949.

Linda’s spirit is one of giving and one of service. She is quick to remind others of our individual responsibility to give and to serve others, especially children. As she shared with legislators during a 1982 committee meeting, “But remember, you and I are our brother’s keeper, and you and I are responsible for the kind of education they (the children of Mississippi) receive.” When asked about her most challenging times with

I have known Ms. Anglin for several years and I have witnessed her caring spirit firsthand. The smile on her face and the twinkle in her eyes when she talks about making a difference for children is like a window to her heart.

**Dennis Silas
MPE President, 2007-2008**

the MPE, Linda quickly replied, “That is hard to say because I’m one of those that meets challenges head on. I don’t give up. I guess you’d say I’m persistent.”

Perhaps a small glimpse of Linda’s contributions not only to the Mississippi Professional Educators, but to our state as a whole and to its children, is best summarized in Governor William Winter’s personal words to Linda in a February 1983 note thanking her for her support and efforts on behalf of passage of the historic Education Reform Act of 1982: “Because of your untiring efforts, the children of Mississippi will have a chance for fuller and more productive lives.” Indeed, our organization and our state are eternally indebted to Linda Anglin, our founder, mentor and friend.

-Kelly Riley, MPE Executive Assistant

I can’t imagine MPE without Linda Anglin—because without her there wouldn’t be MPE! Ms. Linda has always been available to me for advice and I especially depended on this during my term as State President. I’d look at her and think, “I’ve got some really big shoes to fill”. Her comments of encouragement made me feel better. During my years on the board, I’ve known I could rely on her sharing her experiences to help me understand what MPE is and what it stands for. This has been very important as decisions and changes were made.

**Philene Allen, Board Member
MPE President, 2000-2001**



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Brandon Middle School Teacher Finalist for Teaching Award

LaVonda White, a math teacher at Brandon Middle School, has been chosen by the Mississippi Department of Education as one of six finalists for The Presidential Award for Excellence in Math and Science Teaching. Three math and three science teachers are selected in each state each year for the award. One top math teacher and one top science teacher will be named at the national level. Currently in her tenth year of teaching, LaVonda taught for three years at Rankin County Alternative School before joining the faculty of Brandon Middle School. Ms. White has been a member of MPE since 2003.

Tupelo Educator Honored as Teacher of Distinction

Kenneth Griswold was one of thirteen Tupelo educators honored as Teachers of Distinction in September by the CREATE Foundation. Funded by a variety of endowments, CREATE gives the awards annually to recognize, reward and support exceptional teachers and assistant teachers in the Tupelo Public School District. A teacher at Lawndale Elementary, Kenneth received a check for \$1,000. Mr. Griswold has been a member of MPE since 2006.

Greene County Teacher Receives Walmart's Teacher of the Year Award

Mrs. Pauline Williams, a first grade teacher at McLain Elementary School in the Greene County School system, recently received a big surprise. Ms. Linda McKnight, manager of Lucedale Walmart, visited Mrs. Williams' classroom and announced that she had been chosen as Walmart's Teacher of the Year. McClain School was presented with a \$1,000 check.

Mrs. Williams has a total of 19 years of service to the public schools in Mississippi. She began her career as a teacher assistant at McLain Elementary School. She then received her B.S. and Master's Degrees from William Carey University. Pauline is married to Tony Williams of Neely. They have two daughters, Kryns and Brittany. Mrs. Williams has been a member of MPE since 1992.



Mrs. Williams is presented with a check for \$1,000 by Walmart manager, Linda McKnight

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Dropout Recovery: It's time to stop digging, Mississippi

The following editorial by Dr. Scott Elliott, President of Meridian Community College, ran in the Meridian Star newspaper and provides additional information regarding our community and junior colleges' dropout recovery initiative that was discussed in the Summer 2007 MPE Journal.



There's an old country saying that goes something like, "When you find yourself in a hole, stop digging."

Well, there can be no doubt that Mississippi is in a hole, and has been for a long time, where high school dropouts are concerned. Each year that hole deepens by thousands upon thousands of young people, who for whatever reasons, fail to finish what they started in their K-12 public school experience. Specifically, the number of non-completers may be somewhere between 14,000 and 17,000 annually, referencing reports generated by State Economist Phil Pepper and the U.S. Census Bureau.

No matter the actual tally, one thing is abundantly clear — it's an abyss of lost human potential already occupied by some 475,000 Mississippians over the age of 25 who never earned a high school diploma or GED.

The Mississippi Community College System, comprised of 15 institutions geographically blanketing the state, has proposed to join forces with the public school system to attack the dropout epidemic on both ends of the equation. State Public School Superintendent Dr. Hank Bounds advocates a "dropout prevention" program which would hopefully improve the K-12 retention rate. Community colleges, on the other hand, have asked the State Legislature to support a "Dropout Recovery" initiative designed to assist thousands of Mississippians each year in earning a GED while concurrently engaging in fast-track job training programs.

In essence, the Dropout Recovery program would equip participants with life skills and job skills — two things a citizen-worker must possess to adequately function in today's global economy. The Adult Basic Education/GED preparation piece of the program will cause students to read, write, and solve mathematics problems at a higher level. Such literacy tools enable a worker to effectively interface with his/her employers and peers and meet the challenge of increasing responsibility. The fast-track job training piece could equip students with specific skills such as hanging sheetrock, laying floor tile, roofing, driving a commercial truck, welding, and the list goes on.

Empowered with such skills, a graduate of the Dropout Recovery program would be positioned to join the workforce in an entry-level capacity and/or transition into a community college certificate or degree program leading to even greater earnings potential.

How much will the Dropout Recovery program cost? Community colleges have established a goal of enrolling 4,250 students (or roughly 25 percent of the Census Bureau's projected annual high school dropout pool). The colleges have requested \$16,477,250 in support from the Legislature to conduct the program, which breaks down to \$3,877 per student — the same amount of state support projected for a community college full-time equivalent student in FY08. That's considerably less than the estimated \$4,601 that same student would cost the State of Mississippi if he/she stayed in high school and completed their senior year.

The requested funds would enable each community college to craft training programs that might most benefit not only the individual, but also industry in the districts they serve. By that, one district might need a lot of welders; another might need more bricklayers. In any event, each community college will have to design curriculum, pay teachers, purchase program materials and supplies, and provide technological support among other expenses.

But the money would accomplish more than that. It would allow each college to provide "wrap-around" assistance to needy students for child care, transportation, and tutoring/mentoring — areas that have historically proven barriers to

(con't next page)

students persisting in their educational goals. The question, however, is not so much what it will cost Mississippians to implement the Dropout Recovery program. More to the point, the question is, “how much will it cost us if we don’t?”

Dropouts who fail to earn at least a GED are typically relegated, at best, to minimum wage jobs. At worst, such people, who ultimately see no hope for a productive, meaningful future, will become beneficiaries of federal and state subsidy programs or gravitate to illegal activities and join another sorrowful Mississippi “hole” — that of our prison population. That growing community now numbers over 22,000, according to the Department of Corrections (DOC) Website.

A person earning minimum wage is going to pay a maximum of about \$197 in state income taxes and contribute very little to state sales tax revenues because of their limited buying power. Conversely, a sheetrock hanger, as an example, will likely earn almost \$21,000 a year (given a wage of \$10 per hour) and pay about \$600 per year in state income taxes, not to mention contributing more to the economy in sales taxes.

An inmate? According to the DOC Web site, Mississippians pay about \$13,571 per year to support each prisoner, based on FY05 figures. And consider this — Mississippi inmates function at about a 5th grade level, educationally speaking. The correlation between lack of educational attainment and the penchant for crime seems obvious.

So, in the end, the community colleges’ proposed Dropout Recovery program is all about attacking an economic and social dilemma. Economically speaking, we don’t need higher taxes in Mississippi. What we need is to build upon our current momentum by strengthening and broadening the tax base. Equipping more citizens with earnings power and, therefore, keeping them off subsidy rolls and out of prison is one way to bolster that tax base.

Socially speaking, there is no greater loss than that of human potential. So, at the end of the day, it’s a “pay me a little bit now to avoid paying me a lot more later” proposition. We have a choice between trying to instill hope in the hopeless and, therefore, improving the quality of life for all Mississippians or continuing to dig deeper economic and social holes.

And, sadly, some holes become graves. Something to ponder.

Comprehension: Open the Door to Learning by Susan May

Reading is one of the most important skills an individual can have. The ability to read allows one to fill out applications for employment; read employee materials such as benefit information or training manuals; understand directions, recipes for food preparation, or warnings on cleaning fluids; directions for medications; and for the sheer joy of it. But, if one cannot comprehend what is read, reading has no meaning. To understand comprehension, it is necessary to: know what comprehension is and why comprehension is important; the skills a reader needs for comprehension; instructional strategies for comprehension; and why comprehension is assessed and the importance of comprehension assessment.

Researchers and educators have a variety of definitions for comprehension. One must get meaning from written text (Vaughn & Edmonds, 2006). Comprehension expands a reader’s knowledge through thinking (Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003). Comprehension is engaging in a process, and asking questions (Vacca, Vacca & Gove, 2000). Essentially, comprehension is reading text, connecting to the text, deriving meaning from the text, and using the text in some manner to expand that knowledge.

Reading comprehension is crucial because it is the predominant method individuals used to gather and process information. Comprehension is needed to understand written information and to utilize that information in daily life and for specific purposes such as locating facts, following directions, or reading the

newspaper. Zimmermann and Hutchins state the reason for comprehension best, “it opens the door to virtually all other learning” (2003, p. 4). In other words, without comprehension, learning social studies, algebra or geometry, health, psychology, history, or even automotive mechanics would not be possible.

When an individual uses all the techniques needed, comprehension occurs. The skills required for comprehension are identified as: questioning techniques, prior knowledge, purpose, fluency, inference, visualization, selection/organization abilities, and self-monitoring skills (Gunning, 2002; Nation & Angell, 2006; Neufeld, 2005/2006; Shanker & Ekwall, 1998; Vacca et al., 2000; Vaughn & Edmonds, 2006; Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003). When these skills are present and the reader uses these skills concurrently, and without prompting (Neufeld, 2005/2006), comprehension occurs.

A fundamental technique used by the reader to gather information about the text is questioning. This practice is necessary for the reader because the reader gains valuable information when making inquiries of the nature of the text, the purpose of the text, and the person or persons in the text (Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003).

Background knowledge is knowledge the reader has stored in memory prior to reading the text – what the reader already knows. The reader recalls information related to the text in order to make personal connections with the text (Shanker & Ekwall, 1998). The reader must also know the purpose for reading – for specific information or for pleasure - what the author wants the reader to know or gain from the text (Neufeld, 2005/2006). Fluency is

reading words, phrases, and sentences without mistakes. A reader must see and decode each word, enunciate (in the mind) each word correctly, use the punctuation of the sentence in the correct manner, and use the right tempo and rhythm without stumbling to be fluent (Shanker & Ekwall, 1998). Inference, or making predictions, is another necessary skill a proficient reader must possess. The reader must speculate on what will happen next in the text or how the character will react in a situation (Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003). Visualizing the text in the mind is another quality a reader must obtain. If the reader can picture, or can see what is in the text, in the mind, the reader can connect and better understand the text (Gunning, 2002). The reader must have the capacity to derive meaning from the text through selecting the main ideas, the characters, implied meanings; to use clues within the text; to utilize supporting sentences; and to understand how the text is organized (Gunning, 2002). Self-monitoring is a crucial skill for comprehension. The reader must know when the text is not understood and the steps needed to accomplish comprehension. The reader may need to re-read a sentence or passage, the reader may need to use questioning techniques, or the reader may need to mentally summarize the text (Gunning, 2002; Neufeld, 2005/2006).

If any of these measures are not in place, reading comprehension may not take place. If reading comprehension does not take place, the reader will not understand the text. If the reader does not understand the text, the reader may not learn. It is especially important for young students to comprehend text when reading. Not comprehending could impede learning or even promotion to the next grade level. If a student does not comprehend, the student's teacher must take steps to teach or reteach the skills needed for comprehension to the student. Teachers use several strategies to teach comprehension. Teachers can and should model, or "act" the strategies for students (Gunning, 2002; Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003). A most effective strategy to teach strategies is the use of think-a-louds. Teachers ask themselves questions or make comments about the text, but do so aloud, allowing students to see how the process works (Gunning, 2002). Questioning strategies involve making inquiries to determine the purpose of the text, to gain pertinent information from the text, to activate prior knowledge, and to make predictions about the text. Reciprocal questioning, where the teacher asks students questions about the text and the students ask the teacher questions about the text, is also a valuable tool in teaching questioning techniques (Vacca et al., 2000). Teachers can use semantic and graphic organizers with students to derive relevant information from the text such as main ideas, main characters and distinguishing traits, or important dates or facts (Vaughn & Edmonds, 2006). Creating images of the text in the mind helps students understand the text. Teachers can demonstrate this strategy using picture books or telling students to imagine a movie playing inside the student's minds (Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003). Cloze Activities are also beneficial for teaching comprehension skills. Basically, Cloze activities are fill-in-the-blank sentences or paragraphs that students can use to help locate information in text or show knowledge gained from text (Cain & Oakhill, 2006). Providing students with guided practice in reading and independent practice in reading using comprehension strategies is also an excellent technique (Neufeld, 2005/2006). Teachers need to instruct students in self-monitoring techniques. Students need to know when comprehension is not taking place, and then take the steps necessary to "fix" the problem (Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003). Tech

niques used to restore comprehension include re-reading the sentence or paragraph, and all the comprehension strategies mentioned above (Vaughn & Edmonds, 2006; Zimmermann & Hutchins, 2003).

Why do teachers need to assess students for comprehension? According to Cain and Oakhill (2006), teachers need to assess students for comprehension because teachers must monitor the progress of students. If students understand what is read and the students are learning, then the students can move to higher levels of reading. If students do not understand text, teachers must detect and diagnose the difficulty and re-teach comprehension strategies.

How do teachers know if students comprehend? Teachers can use both formal and informal assessments to check for students' comprehension. Formal assessments are standardized tests and criterion-referenced tests. Standardized tests, or norm-referenced tests, compare groups of students with a sample group, usually same age or in the same grade (Gunning, 2002; Shanker & Ekwall, 1998; & Vacca et al., 2000). Criterion-referenced tests compare students' performance on specific benchmarks (Gunning, 2002; Shanker & Ekwall, 1998; & Vacca et al., 2000). Informal assessments are usually created by the teacher to check for students' comprehension (Gunning, 2002; Vacca et al., 2000).

Informal assessments include questioning students, using Cloze activities, observation, and informal reading inventories (IRI) – a chain of readings that progressively increase in complexity and are used to assess verbal reading and understanding (Gunning, 2002).

Comprehending text is a dynamic and adaptable process by which individuals see the text, connects the text with information stored in memory, activates the knowledge from memory, and utilizes the information to connect with the text (Gunning, 2002). Individuals read for pleasure and to gain knowledge that can be applied at that moment or later in time. For individuals to comprehend, the components needed for comprehension must work simultaneously. When individuals comprehend text, learn from that text, and develop that knowledge, then individuals can apply that knowledge into other facets of daily life. When individuals comprehend, the door to learning is truly opened.

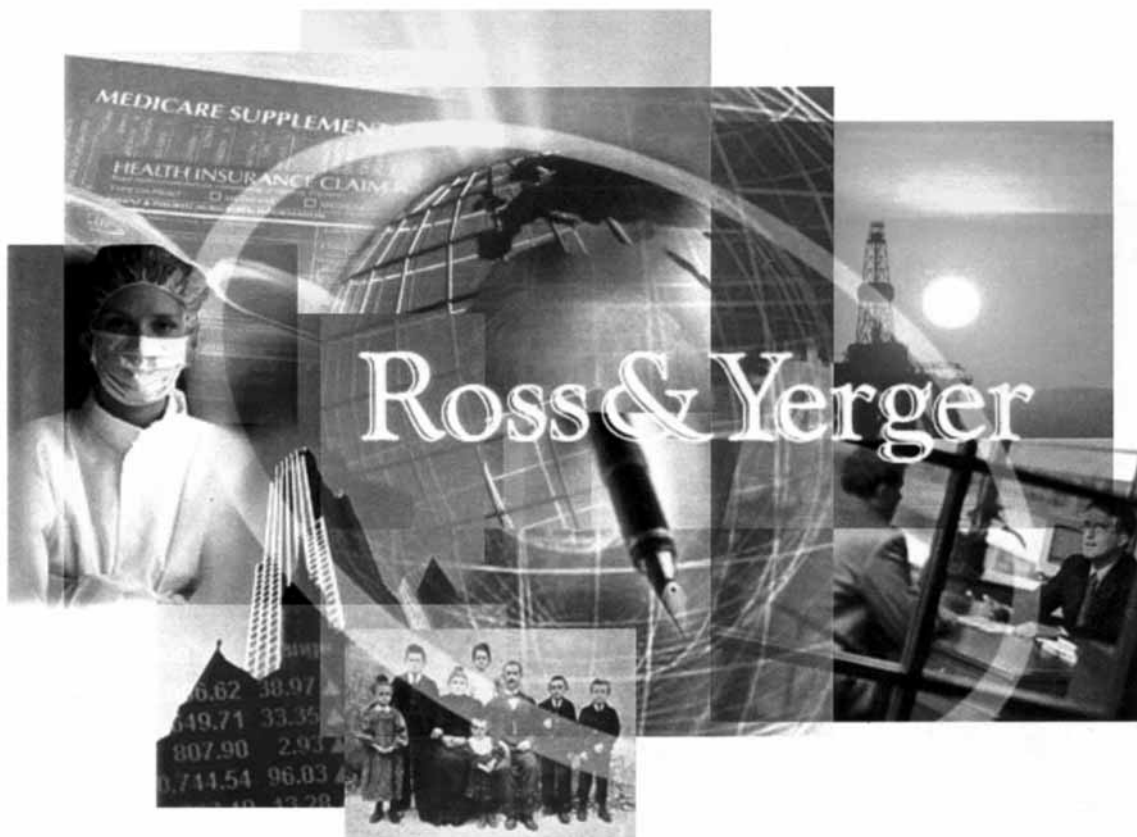
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