

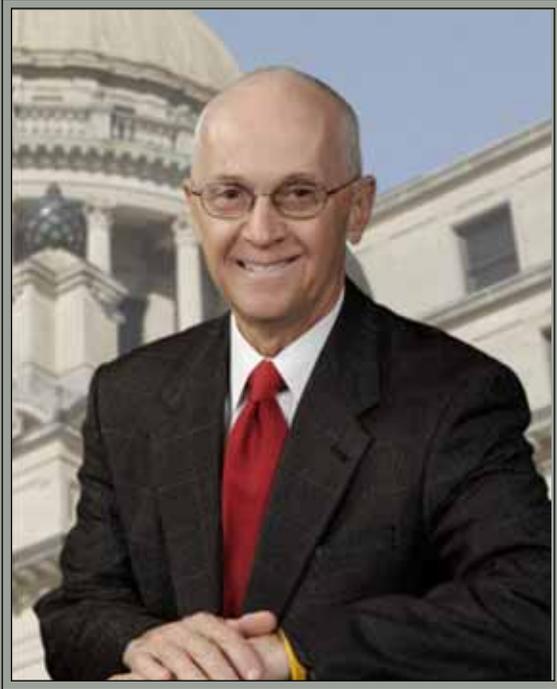


MPE Journal

www.mpe.org

Winter, 2008 Vol. 20, No.3

MPE Salutes our Legislative Leadership



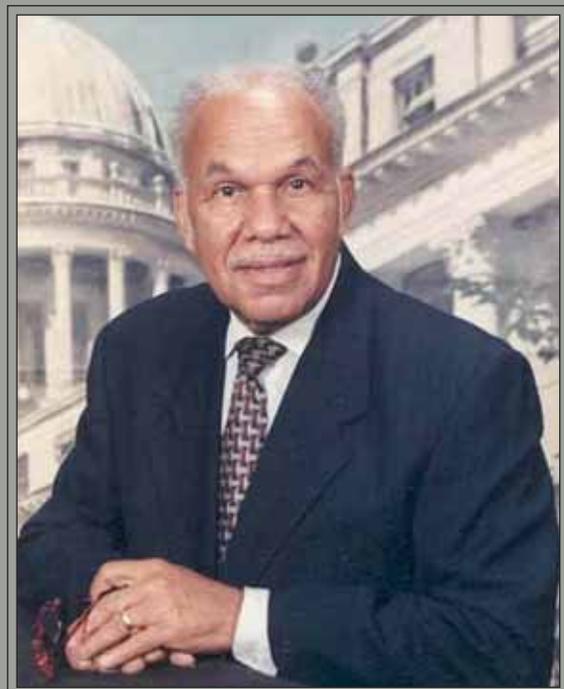
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Senator Videt Carmichael



Senator Doug Davis



Representative Charles Young

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**Executive Director**

Judy Rhodes

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

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Third class postage paid at Jackson, MS.

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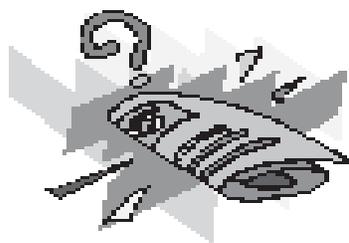
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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

DIANNE SELLERS

It is nearly 2009 and time for the NAEP (National Assessment of Educational Progress) teams to enter many schools this winter to conduct the 2009 assessment. Many of my friends are preparing for this important task to help compile information that is used to compose the *Nation's Report Card*. I was fortunate to be part of that team in 2007 and I know what valuable information is gathered through this assessment.

Looking back over Mississippi's history of mathematics and reading scores, the state has been below the national average for both subjects since 1992. Scores are recorded for grades 4 and 8. A more detailed data chart and information about the *Nation's Report Card* can be found on the NAEP website (www.nces.ed.gov).

In a report that was published in 2007, 19% of Mississippi students scored at a proficient or advanced level on NAEP in math. This compared to 44% of students in Vermont. Mississippi and New Mexico tied for the lowest percentage. 18% of Mississippi students scored at a proficient or advanced level in reading, while the highest percentage was 44% in Massachusetts.

Scores are also recorded for grade 12. In 2005, the average reading score for high school seniors was lower than the score in 1992. The math scores for grade 12 could not be compared with previous years because the 2005 mathematics assessment is based on a new framework that includes more questions on algebra and data analysis.

As you can see there is work to be done to improve test scores and you began the year with that goal. Keep up the good work!

The other day I was looking at a chart with dropout rates for each state. It recorded the rate from 1993-94 to 2000-01. The good news from the results shows that 27 states decreased their dropout rate, 7 states had an increase and 2 states maintained the same percentage. Some states had no results which accounts for a deficit of less than 50. Mississippi was one of the 27 states with a decrease!

The dropout problem has been a concern of mine for years and that is why I mention it frequently. The state is on target to address this problem.

We heard the dreaded words again "budget cuts". Educators rely on MAEP funding for the bare necessities. As the legislature begins, the MPE staff will keep informed of new developments and relay that information to you through the Friday email.

I wish you all a joyous Christmas season and a prosperous new year. May God bless you through this holiday season.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

JUDY RHODES



We have focused this issue of the *MPE Journal* on the Mississippi Legislature and especially the chairmen of the Education committees and chairmen of the University and Colleges committees of both the House of Representatives and the Senate. The work of these committees is vital to the future of public education in Mississippi, including the k-12 system, universities and community college systems. In any given year over 3,000 bills will be filed with maybe 500 actually passing and becoming law. The education committees will generally consider over 200 bills with maybe 10% actually passing. It is a long and arduous process and one that requires numerous meetings and debates, phone calls, emails and letters. It is easy for us as Mississippi citizens to complain about our legislative system and its members. With my many years of working with the Mississippi Legislature, I have come to respect the work these men and women do for our state. They generally work an enormous amount of hours, especially during the session and take an enormous amount of criticism, sometimes deserved but many times not. They have very difficult decisions to make in voting on issues as bills move through the process. Many times a bill, while overall intent may be good, will have provisions included that destroy or impede the overall intent. So every amendment must be reviewed and considered carefully.

We have met with Chairman Carmichael, Chairman Brown, Chairman Davis, and Chairman Young over the last few weeks to discuss issues expected to be considered in the coming session, beginning in January. While we may not always agree with them, I can tell you that these gentlemen have the best intent for education in Mississippi and each of them take their responsibilities very seriously. While the "budget" is always the main issue of each session; with the economic situation, it most assuredly will be especially difficult this time. Please review summaries of the interviews included in this Journal issue.

As the MPE continues to experience tremendous growth, we are in a position to have significant impact on policy decisions relative to education, whether it be through the respective agencies or the legislature. But in order for us to impact legislation, it is critical that legislators hear from you as members. While we as staff can monitor legislation, attend meetings and meet with legislators, the most effective means of affecting a legislator's vote is his/her constituents, the people that vote for that legislator at home. As a result, we have included legislative contact information in this issue. I hope you will keep this copy of the *Journal* at hand, so you can share your opinion on issues with your legislators during the session. Believe me, they value your opinion.

One of the founding principles of MPE is PROFESSIONALISM. So as I know you will always be professional in your communications.

Judy

MS Department of Education News:

Dr. Hank M. Bounds State Superintendent of Education



Many of you have probably seen the television commercials for the cell phone company that features an army of people, from tower technicians to sales representatives, that are needed to ensure that every customer has coverage wherever they go. Teaching is like that. Although teachers may be standing alone in their classrooms, an army of support must stand behind them to ensure they have the tools, resources and assistance necessary to provide an excellent education to every child every day.

From fellow teachers, principals and superintendents on the local level to the Mississippi Department of Education, State Board and Legislature on the state level, we must all stand behind teachers. We all know that the quality of the teacher in the classroom is the single greatest predictor of student achievement. We must give teachers what they need to give students what they need.

The Mississippi Board of Education has included several measures to help teachers in their Legislative Priorities for the 2009 Legislative Session. First, full funding of the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP) remains a top priority for the State Board. MAEP was designed to provide the necessary resources to all school districts in an equitable manner and must be fully funded. Full funding includes \$9.2 million for Phase II of the expansion of the teacher salary schedule from 25 to 35 years as mandated by Senate Bill 2176 in the 2008 Legislative Session. A portion of the sales tax diversion into the Education Enhancement Fund for teacher supplies has been redirected to fund MAEP for six of the last seven years. Because of this, districts have not had the resources needed for instructional supplies, as prescribed by MS Code §37-61-33.

The State Board has also requested funding a Teacher Recruitment Initiative. Approximately 6,000 teachers are eligible to retire each year, but only 1,400 new teachers graduate from Mississippi's colleges and universities each year. Of those, only 900 actually teach. Nationally, only half of teachers remain in the classroom past the first five years. Mississippi must launch a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan to ensure that there is a quality teacher in every classroom.

Over the past decade, teacher salaries in Mississippi have increased dramatically. However, to remain competitive with job opportunities in surrounding states, the State Board supports increasing teacher salaries by three percent. This would cost the state \$42 million to implement.

Children who do not have a rich educational experience in early childhood often start behind and stay behind. The State Board supports funding the Early Learning Collaborative Act of 2007, which authorized a voluntary Early Care and Education Grant Program. This program would foster collaboration among schools, Head Start Centers and child care facilities.

Other State Board priorities include restoration of Public School Building Funds, High School Redesign, Schools At Risk, Mississippi Student Information System upgrade, appointed superintendents and decreasing the bond passage rate from 60 percent to 55 percent.

The Legislative Task Force on Underperforming Schools and Districts, as established by Senate Bill 2405 in the 2008 Legislative Session, met several times during the summer and fall to examine what measures are necessary to improve low performing schools. They looked at every facet of school improvement, from accountability measures to takeover regulations and unveiled their recommendations last month. Among those recommendations, they included following the findings from the Blue Ribbon Commission on Teacher Preparation, providing funds for a national and international recruitment program and funding a study of the Critical Needs Scholarship Program.

The Task Force also emphasized the importance of community involvement and leadership, including principals, superintendents and school board members. They also recommended the creation of the Mississippi Recovery School District, which would include all local school districts under conservatorship and have its own superintendent.

While the priorities of the State Board and the recommendations of the Task Force tackle different aspects of education, they all have one goal in mind: giving teachers the support they need to provide an excellent education to all of Mississippi's boys and girls.



Community College News:

Dr. Eric Clark

SBCJC Executive Director

With the current discouraging state of our nation's economy, the role of Mississippi's community colleges is more vital than ever. Our colleges provide training and services that help our citizens achieve better lives. Whether it is the employee looking to receive additional workforce training or students furthering their education, the community colleges continue to provide new possibilities for Mississippians.

Workforce training is essential to the advancement of our state's economy. The community colleges work with both employees and employers to provide this service. With the recent downturn of the economy, folks are looking to receive additional training that will enhance their skills. They need to look no further than their local community college to receive this training. Companies can also partner with the colleges to improve their workforce. The result will be better employees who can do a better and more efficient job. The training received at a community college will not only benefit the employee but also the employer. More than 150,000 Mississippians receive workforce training at a community college each year.

Initial reports show that enrollment is up across the system for the fall semester. Preliminary numbers have enrollment at slightly more than 73,000 students. After the auditing process is complete, I think our enrollment will be over 72,000, which will be an increase from the previous fall enrollment of 67,719. Numbers are also up at our Virtual Community College where 20,711 students are enrolled in over 40,000 online classes. These statistics show that people realize the importance of furthering their education and are doing so locally.

In previous articles, I have mentioned that on average a community college graduate earns \$9,100 a year more than a high school graduate. This is not the only telling statistic. A community college graduate has a higher perception of having excellent or very good health. Also, folks with a degree from a community college are more than 30 percent more likely to vote in an election than someone with only a high school diploma. Finally, someone with a community college associate degree will earn on average 28 percent more money over his or her lifetime. Education past the high school level is important and statistics reflect that fact. Graduates will not only earn more money over their lifetime but will also be more productive members of society.

Recently, Governor Barbour asked all state agencies to prepare for a 2 percent cut this fiscal year and a possible 4 percent cut the next year, because of lower than expected revenue collections. There is no doubt that the upcoming legislative session will be a challenging one when it comes to the budget. The truth is that workforce training and other programs our colleges offer allow more people to become employable. When these people are hired, they will buy more goods which will increase our state's revenue. My point is that the money the Legislature appropriates for the community colleges next year will be one of the best investments our state can make.

Community colleges are part of the solution to the current economic crisis. The training they provide is not only vital to the employee looking to enhance their skills but also to the company looking to locate their facility to Mississippi. Also, our graduates are given marketability when they finish their classes. The education they receive will allow them to not only further their career but also better their life. Our citizens are realizing this, and the fact can be seen by the recent increase in our enrollment, as well as statistics on income earnings. Community colleges help our state in so many ways and that is something that we can be extremely proud of as Mississippians.

Mississippi IHL News:

Dr. Aubrey Lucas

Interim Commissioner of Higher Education



Since 1944, when Mississippi citizens realized their interests were protected through the establishment of a constitutional Board of Trustees, Mississippi has enjoyed a System of higher education that has been able to focus primarily and nearly exclusively on higher education. Our System of higher education is key to the continued development of our state, and keeping its current formation is at the heart of our State's anticipated continued future success.

Our System of higher education keeps before it the needs of the entire state while also considering the needs of each institution. Mississippi's academic offerings are a prime example. Over the last 30 years, under our existing System, we have fine tuned and moderated the course offerings to meet the needs of the state. Most of our degree programs are successful because, over the years, we have discontinued those that are not. Avoiding unnecessary duplication and meeting future demands by offering academic courses that fill future needs allow our System of higher education to be more responsive to meet the needs of our population than even before.

How else does Mississippi's higher education System protect the State's interests by meeting the needs of the State's citizens? It does so by:

- Facilitating the Board's strategic initiative of increasing the quantity of baccalaureate degree holders of even higher quality.
- Supporting statewide unified academic progress, such as the System-wide articulation agreement with Mississippi's community and junior colleges.
- Spearheading such initiatives as the Blue Ribbon Committee for the Redesign of Teacher Preparation, established to increase the quality and quantity of teachers in Mississippi by improving teacher preparation and recruitment programs statewide;
- Initiating and implementing the College Readiness Taskforce, which determines what students academically need to know when they finish high school in order to be successful during their first year of college;
- Encouraging statewide participation in national education advocacy projects, such as the National Association of System Head's Access to Success Initiative; the Academic Common Market; and the Southern Regional Education Board's Doctoral Scholars Program;
- Promoting and marketing the importance of higher education, including the conceptualization, completion, and maintenance of a higher education website specific to Mississippi and devoted to post-secondary education at every level, as well as a corresponding outreach campaign;
- Providing financial oversight of the System, as well as audit and legal support;
- Ensuring efficient, effective, and accurate data collection;
- Promoting best practices and efficiencies among institutions;
- Encouraging cost savings System-wide, including group purchasing, energy efficiency, and debt insurance; and
- Coordinating and overseeing risk and crisis management protocols.

Mississippi's current System of higher education is in the best interest of the State and her citizens. There is competition within our eight public universities, but I believe our Institutional Executive Officers would agree there is not contention. Our universities are antonymous, yet not antagonistic. Through the foresight of Mississippi's citizens, we currently have a System of higher education in place that works for all of us. With it, we anticipate a prosperous future.

MPE and Retirement

by Philene Allen,
MPE Board of Directors
Retiree Representative

So, the time has come and you've made the big decision to retire. Where does MPE fit into your life of retirement? There definitely is a place for you in the membership even as a retired educator.

Our organization has had a Retired Educator membership for as long as I can remember and the dues have never changed! For \$10 per year, you are a member and receive the Journal in the mail, the weekly emails from our director and have access to the "members only" portion of our web-page. You also are invited to attend the conference in the spring and can serve on committees at the state level. We maintain one board position representing retirees. The optional long term care coverage at a discounted rate, Perks Card membership, optional auto/home insurance at a discounted rate and dental and vision benefits are available for retired members. The professional liability protection and accidental death & dismemberment insurance coverage **are not** included in this membership.

The Part-time or Non-Certified membership was added several years ago and is perfect for many retirees. The dues are \$60 a year or \$5.25 for a monthly draft. This is for those of us who choose to still be involved with schools after retirement in a part-time capacity or as a volunteer. Most importantly, the professional liability protection is a part of this membership. The first few years after I retired I volunteered to tutor in our local schools and I realized that I was in a very vulnerable position because I was alone with a student during these sessions and, since I wasn't a district employee, I didn't have anyone really supporting me should any problems arise. Every benefit provided with the Professional classification is included with this membership.

We do hope you will continue with MPE—the largest and fastest growing professional educators' organization in Mississippi.

Merry Christmas

AND A

Happy New Year

FROM THE

Mississippi Professional Educators

MPE 2009

GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS

Mississippi Professional Educators will award up to five scholarships in the amount of \$1,000 each to MPE members who wish to pursue graduate level studies at a college or university in the state of Mississippi.

Eligibility requirements for the scholarship include:

- Applicant is a member of MPE
- Applicant will be under contract as a full-time educator in Mississippi during the upcoming school year
- Applicant is accepted and enrolled in graduate course work at a Mississippi college or university OR intends to enroll in such coursework if awarded a scholarship

For more information, visit www.mpe.org. Applications must be received in the MPE office by March 15, 2009.

MPB Educators Express Offers Mississippi's Teachers a New and Free Web-based Development Tool!



MPB Educators Express is Mississippi Public Broadcasting's 21st Century destination for online learning. State-of-the-art technology combined with a wealth of content-rich resources makes learning a dynamic, interactive experience for all ages. MPB Educators Express provides exciting multimedia educational materials to serve the teachers, parents, and students of Mississippi.

HotChalk is the newest educational resource brought to you through MPB Educators Express. It is a web-based learning environment which combines a learning management system with a digital content distribution platform. It provides the tools for collaboration for K-12 teachers, students and parents to improve education and drive measurable student results. **Mississippi Public Broadcasting (MPB)** has partnered with HotChalk to deliver the best selection of digital content available from world-class producers including National Geographic, Weston Woods and PBS. These resources are categorized by grade and subject and segmented for "teachable moments," achieving high impact use in the classroom.

HotChalk features:

- a Learning Management System (LMS) accessible by any Internet browser - teachers communicate directly with parents and students by assigning and retrieving homework, grades, and personal notes. Parents get notifications when grades are posted and critical assignments are submitted, helping them stay connected to their child's educational progress and discover opportunities for further involvement and support when their child needs help;
- a media-rich library of 3500 teacher-contributed lesson plans and digital content including audio, video, textbook, and assessment content;
- participation in an online community of educators and leaders focusing on current educational issues through a collaborative education portal with articles and blogs;
- online professional development for teachers.

All premium content available through HotChalk is aligned to state standards. These assets provide educators with extraordinary access to curriculum content and are ready for simple integration for the classroom. Preview, download or stream content from school or at home using an easy-to-use and powerful Web 2.0 interface that uses progressive search technology to deliver results quickly and accurately. In addition, MPB is providing teachers the opportunity to select content from a list of digitized titles that best meet their needs and the needs of their students.

Our partnership with HotChalk provides all of our educators from teachers to the administration with an easy and effective way to engage students with exciting and compelling content that will improve their learning experience and streamline their preparation time, promote classroom technology integration, and create best practices and authentic learning experiences.

For more information on *HotChalk* or other MPB Educators Express services, visit www.mpbonline.org.



Member Spotlight



Jennifer Pratt Recruits 35 New Members!

MPE congratulates Jennifer Pratt, Building Representative for Houston High School, for recruiting 35 new members since August 1st! An Alternative Education teacher, Jen-



nifer has been a MPE member since 1999. Ms. Pratt recently received a recruitment reward for \$590 from MPE. Great work, Jennifer!

June Hollis visits Alaska's Prince William Sound

June Hollis, a retired geography teacher from Brandon High School, recently participated in an Earthwatch expedition to Shoup Bay, Alaska in the Prince William Sound. During the project, Hollis helped monitor



(Hollis holding a kittiwake)

Black legged kittiwakes, a species of sea birds with an enormous colony in Shoup Bay. She and her group participated in various activities relating to the kittiwakes, including measuring and banding chicks, checking nests, watching for predators and capturing adult kittiwakes. Ms. Hollis was particularly impressed with the beauty of the Alaskan landscape and the everlasting daylight. Hollis stated, "Actually, in my three trips there, I have never seen it dark in Alaska, at least not in the places where I have been. The sounds, the beauty, the crisp clean cold air, the birds, new friends, and the opportunity to make a difference all contribute to the sense of place there in Shoup Bay, Alaska."

Ms. Hollis serves as the field rep for our state and encourages other Mississippi educators to participate in Earthwatch projects. Please feel free to contact her at junehollis@hotmail.com for more information.



MPE Board Member Receives Humanities Honor

Dr. Benny Hornsby, MPE Board of Directors Community College Representative, has been selected as Pearl River Community College's Humanities Teacher of the Year. The Mississippi Humanities Council celebrates Arts and Humanities Month each October by supporting Humanities Teacher Awards to one humanities faculty member at each institution of higher learning in the state. Only the president or appropriate dean can nominate the faculty member. Congratulations, Dr. Hornsby!

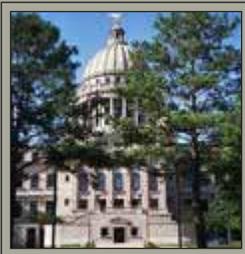
lected as Pearl River Community College's Humanities Teacher of the Year. The Mississippi Humanities Council celebrates Arts and Humanities Month each October by supporting Humanities Teacher Awards to one humanities faculty member at each institution of higher learning in the state. Only the president or appropriate dean can nominate the faculty member. Congratulations, Dr. Hornsby!

Pamela Carruba Honored

Congratulations to MPE member Pamela Carruba for being named the overall middle school winner for the U.S. Senator Thad Cochran Economics Teacher of the Year. Pamela teaches at Bay-Waveland Middle School and has earned her Master Teacher of Economics certification from the Mississippi Council on Economic Education.

A Salute to Education's Legislative Leadership

by Kelly Riley



Of the 3,000 bills filed in any given year for consideration by the Mississippi State Legislature, 500 may actually be passed into law. Education committees generally consider over 200 bills each, with 15-20 becoming law.

Four men supervise and shepherd the bills assigned to the Education and the Universities and Colleges committees in both the Mississippi House of Representatives and the Mississippi State Senate. These four are the leaders who drive the policy decisions that impact kindergarten through university classrooms throughout our state and, more importantly, the lives of the students in those classrooms.

Among the four, they have nearly half a century of combined service in the Mississippi State Legislature. Representative Charles Young, Chairman of the House Universities and Colleges Committee, has served 28 years in the Mississippi House. His counterpart on the Senate Universities and Colleges Committee, Senator Doug Davis, is in his third year as a member of the legislature. The Senate and House Education committees are both chaired by men born in Meridian – Senator Videt Carmichael and Representative Cecil Brown, respectively – and both of whom entered the legislature in 2000.

They have varying professional careers. Chairman Carmichael is a former Social Studies teacher, coach and principal, as well as a former MPE member. Representative Brown is a CPA and an investment advisor. Senator Davis is in the banking industry, while Representative Young manufactures cosmetics products.

But all four share a common goal of improving the educational opportunities and experiences of Mississippi's students. They are all cognizant of the responsibilities they bear as education committee chairmen and they shoulder their chairmanships with

great pride, yet humility. We sat down with them to get their thoughts on the upcoming 2009 Legislative Session and the issues they will face. They all agree that the session, which starts at noon on January 6th, will have its challenges, but its opportunities as well.

2009 Session

The budget and Mississippi's decreased state revenues will be the underlying issue of most bills discussed at the capitol. Mississippi spends approximately 63% of its budget on education (kindergarten through university) and education chairmen cite this as a commitment to education. However, they have differing opinions as to how the legislature and governor should address current revenue shortfalls. Chairman Brown urges that we "should be girding up to fight these cuts and to take available funds out of the Rainy Day Fund and the sooner, the better." Chairman Davis agrees that the Rainy Day Fund is there for a reason and "it is more than sprinkling. But we have to make sure that we are not setting a precedent of using one-time money for reoccurring expenses."

Opinion is split as to if the current economic situation will negate a 3% pay raise for K-12 faculty, mid-level funding for our community colleges or regional average funding for our universities. Chairmen Brown and Carmichael both support fully funding MAEP, including the second year of increasing the annual years of experience increments, but say that other programs, such as early childhood education or high school redesign, might have to sacrifice to fully fund MAEP. Chairmen Davis anticipates that it is too early to determine if any increases in funding, including salary increases, will be pulled off of the table.

Chairmen Carmichael and Brown have worked together the past few months in co-chairing the Task Force to Study Underperforming Schools and School Districts. They both agree that their committees will take up bills addressing low performing schools and governance issues, as well as superintendent and school board leadership issues. Representative Brown anticipates providing addi-

tional tools to MDE to work with low performing districts before they reach the point of conservatorship and taking a hard look at tougher accountability for school boards. “Focusing on governance at the local level, giving MDE more authority with low performing superintendents – this will all impact districts more than anything we have done in a long time,” Brown projects.

Senator Doug Davis has initialized a conversation on the university level regarding moving from Mississippi’s current centralized university system to one of decentralization in which each university would choose its own leader and set its own policies. Senator Davis favors this approach “because it gives a sense of ownership back to each campus. It lets them set their own goals and vision and then put their own people in place to accomplish these goals.” Each university would have a 7-member Board of Trustees, with 4 appointed by the Governor and 3 appointed by the College Board. The governing structure would be similar to that of our community college system. The College Board itself would be more of an advisory board. Each university’s Board of Trustees would determine tuition increases. While Senator Davis is

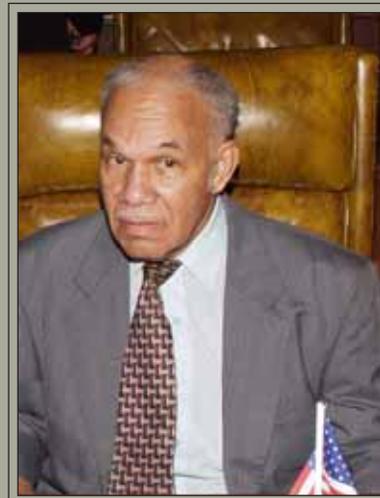


(Chairman Brown discusses the budget situation)

not presumptive enough to assume his idea will pass during the upcoming session, he reports that people are appreciative of the conversation. “I think the conversation is needed and is good to have.”

Representative Charles Young has chaired the House Universities and Colleges Committee since before the other three chairmen were in the legislature. He

assumed chairmanship in 1993. He has faced similar budget forecasts before. He has dealt with tuition increases and with gaming-related courses being taught by our universities. He has also witnessed significant historical changes and decisions regarding higher education in Mississippi. He



(Representative Young has served 28 years in the Mississippi House)

served in 2001 when an agreement was negotiated in the Ayers case, a lawsuit filed in 1975 that charged that Mississippi had maintained a racially segregated higher education system. The legislature committed to financing the agreement in 2002 and the federal courts approved it. Unfortunately, the case is still being appealed. Chairman Young reports that the leadership at the time of the settlement “felt that we should quit playing with this issue and get on with it.” Then-Governor Ronnie Musgrove, House Speaker Tim Ford and others “wanted to stabilize the state - not only in the financial world, but also to try to finalize the case in the education world.”

Goals of a Chairman

Committee chairmanship offers a legislator an avenue to address issues relevant to personal goals he or she may have. During the remainder of their chairmanships the next three years, our education chairmen hope to address several issues which they hope will have long term positive impacts on education in Mississippi.

In the Senate Education Committee, Senator Carmichael plans to enact measures that will eliminate underperforming schools. “Every child in this state should go to at least an ‘adequate’ school,” he states. “I also want to strengthen our governance and leadership policies. When it comes to leadership, one’s experiences have to help him. When I was a principal, my classroom experiences impacted my



(Chairman Carmichael addresses low performing school districts)

decisions. I always tried to remember what it was like in the classroom and to consider an option from that angle.” At the other end of the capitol, Representative Brown is personally concerned about the children who are left out or forced out of our education system – the “child who doesn’t ‘fit in’ because he is too skinny, she is too tall, he is black, she is smart, etc...Our current system isn’t designed to address the child who is picked on, who has no friend to play with at recess, who for some reason doesn’t fit in. Personally, I think that is the dropout problem. Kids want to belong and too many feel like they don’t in our system. We all have problems and we all get depressed. Why do we think kids don’t? We don’t get down to individual kids too well, so by the time they reach 16 or 17 and they don’t feel like they belong, they just leave. And no one seems to notice or mind.”

Senator Davis wants to “give a sense of ownership back to the campuses, to their families and more choice in their leadership.” He plans to review Mississippi’s community colleges next year, specifically to explore ways for community colleges and universities to work together more to educate and prepare our citizens for the workforce and give people an opportunity to earn a 4-year degree. “Our community colleges do an incredible job for economic development in Mississippi. I want to make sure that they work together to provide a better educational environment for Mississippians.” Citing that “a tuition increase is just another barrier to keeping someone from earning a degree,” he is also researching tuition plans such as the State of Georgia’s which locks in tuition for 4 years.

All agree that associations such as MPE play a vital role in policy making and legislators’ decisions. It is imperative that legislators hear from those impacted by their decisions. Welcoming input from “those who are in the fray,” these committee chairmen urged MPE members to contact their respective legislators and share their feelings on proposed legislation.

Lives Outside of the Dome

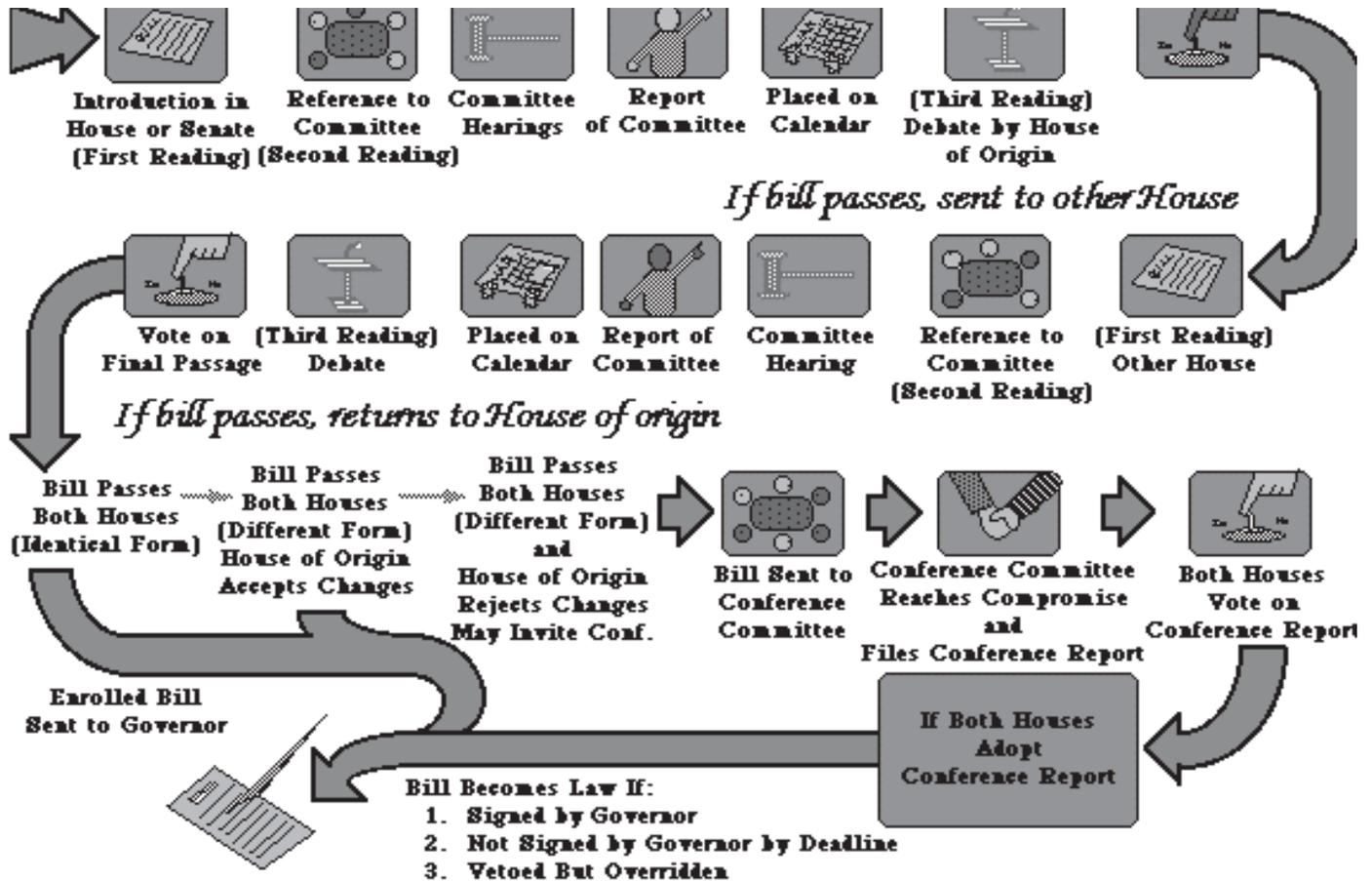
All four chairmen balance public service with their personal lives. Senator Carmichael and Representative Brown are both married to educators. Senator Davis tries to have breakfast with his parents each morning he is home. Representative Young cherishes time with his grandchildren. To relax, Representative Brown enjoys golf and reading, while Senator Davis enjoys travelling. Senator Carmichael has played the mandolin for 20 years and enjoys playing with his high school classmate Mike Compton who performed as a Soggy Bottom Boy on 2001’s Grammy Album of the Year “O Brother, Where Art Thou?”

They agree that it is an extreme honor to serve in the legislature and humbling to know their decisions impact lives across our state. They stress that just as communities must work together for the betterment of their schools, so legislators must work together for the betterment of Mississippi. As stated by Senator Carmichael, “We’re all a product of our environment, so we need to make the environment as good as we can.”



(Chairman Davis explains his proposed higher education reform to MPE Executive Director Judy Rhodes)

How a bill becomes law in Mississippi



UNSURE OF YOUR LOCAL LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT?

Clicking on the “Contact your local legislator” link on MPE’s homepage (www.mpe.org) will take you to Project Vote Smart (www.votesmart.org), an online research tool which provides biographical information on state and national elected officials throughout our country. Simply enter your ZIP code under “Find Your representatives” in the upper left corner at www.votesmart.org to identify your elected officials. For those ZIP codes with multiple legislative districts, Project Vote Smart then requires your 9-digit ZIP code. Simply click on the “Don’t Know Your 9-Digit ZIP?” link and utilize the U.S. Postal Service’s ZIP code tool (diagrammed here) to obtain your 9-Digit ZIP code. Project Vote Smart provides a wealth of information at your fingertips!

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Legislative District Index by County

Many counties are represented by multiple legislative districts. Find your county below to determine which district(s) it contains. Then utilize the subsequent roster to identify your senator or representative by name. You may also visit www.votesmart.org to identify your legislator.

	Senate District(s)	House District(s)	Senate District(s)	House District(s)	Senate District(s)	House District(s)
Adams	37, 38	85, 94, 96, 97	23	51, 54	Pearl River	40, 45, 47
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Chickasaw	8	22	9	10, 12, 13, 33	Sharkey	22
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Claiborne	36	76, 85, 94	31, 32, 33	42, 81, 82, 83, 84	Smith	34
Clarke	33	80, 81, 83, 84, 86	39	53, 91, 97	Stone	43, 45, 47
Clay	16	23, 36, 37, 38	18	27, 45, 48	Sunflower	13
Coahoma	11	9, 25, 26	6, 7, 8	16, 17, 18, 19	Tallahatchie	9, 14, 24
Copiah	35, 36	62, 76, 91, 92	14, 24	30, 32, 34, 46	Tate	10, 11
Covington	35, 41	79, 90, 91	39	53, 92	Tippah	2, 4
DeSoto	1, 19	6, 7, 8, 25, 40, 52	16, 17	20, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41	Tishomingo	4, 5
Forrest	41, 44, 45	90, 93, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 107	20, 21, 25, 26	27, 56, 57, 58, 64, 65, 72, 74	Tunica	11
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					Yazoo	21, 22, 23
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2009 Mississippi Legislative Roster

MPE is pleased to provide the following contact information for each member of the Mississippi Legislature. Information is presented for the Senate and then the House by district. For counties represented by multiple legislators, please visit www.votesmart.org to determine your senator or representative. Certain committee memberships are denoted by asterisks. Please contact your legislator to share your thoughts regarding proposed legislation.

Mississippi Senate

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* Member of Education Committee; ** member of Universities & Colleges Committee; *** member of Appropriations Committee

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* Member of Education Committee; ** member of Universities & Colleges Committee; *** member of Appropriations Committee

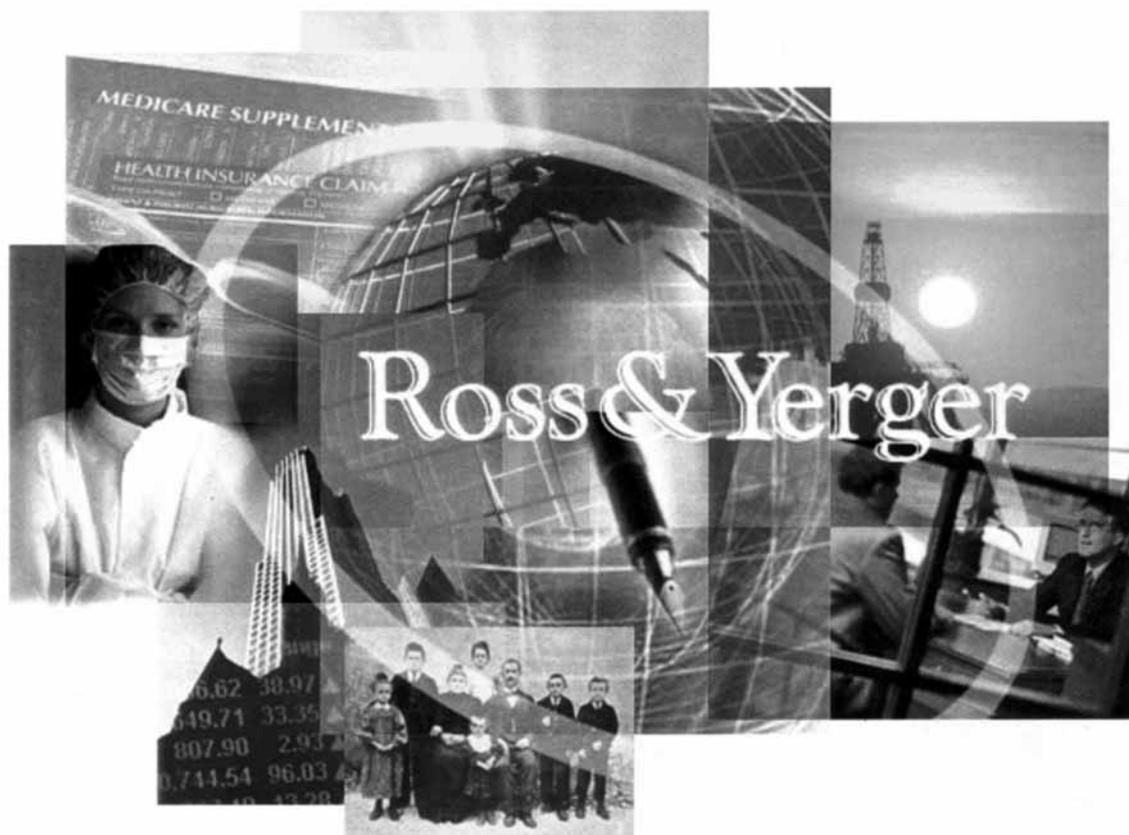
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* Member of Education Committee; ** member of Universities & Colleges Committee; *** member of Appropriations Committee

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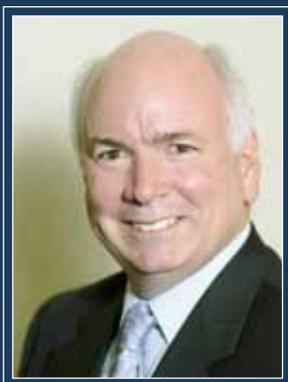
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Mississippi Professional Educators

2009 CONVENTION



Dr. Richard Long,
Keynote Speaker

“Response to Intervention (RTI)”

Saturday, April 4th

The Hilton

Jackson, MS

Registration 8:15-9:00 a.m.

Program 9:00 - 2:00 p.m

Richard Long has over 30 years of expertise in education policy and legislation. Currently he serves as Director of Government Relations for the International Reading Association where he advocates for more effective literacy related education policies on the Hill and in the US Department of Education and other agencies.

Dr. Long has been with the International Reading Association since 1978. Prior to that he served on the staff of Congressman James W. Symington and was Coordinator of Multidisciplinary Interventions at the George Washington University Reading Center.

Dr. Long has been a consultant for USA Today, the World Health Organization, and several US government agencies and education groups. He has been president and executive director of the US Coalition of Education For All and chaired the North American Consultation for Education For All. Currently, Dr. Long is also executive director of the National Association of State Title I Directors. Dr. Long contributes to the Association's outreach and partnerships, forging productive relationships with additional organizations such as Rotary International, National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Coalition for Literacy, National Geographic Society and others.

Mark your calendars now to attend the MPE Spring Convention on April 4th, 2009 at the Jackson Hilton. Dr. Richard Long, Director of Government Relations for the International Reading Association, will be our keynote speaker. Dr. Long will be discussing “Response To Intervention” (RTI). CEU's will be provided for a minimal fee. Please do not miss this opportunity for quality professional development, updates on MPE activities and great fellowship.

Online registration begins February 17th, 2009. More information will be provided in our Friday emails and on the MPE website.

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