What share of the state budget does **EDUCATION** receive?

- **29%** K-12 Public Education
- **48%** Higher Education
- **62%** Other*

**Summary:**
- **Education** 29%
- **Higher Education** 48%
- **Other** 62%

**Budget allocations:**
- **K-12 Public Education**: $2.5B (26%)
- **Higher Education**: $2.1B (22%)
- **Social Welfare**: $1.2B (12%)
- **Transportation**: $678M (7%)
- **Public & Mental Health**: $791M (8%)
- **Other**: $1.7B (18%)
- **Special Fund Agencies**: $594M (6%)
- **Economic Development**: $35M (0%)

**Perception vs. Reality**
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Cover Story
FY 2009-2010 State Budget: Perception vs. Reality
Page 12
Day-to-day references are often made regarding Education’s share of the budget, with it normally being stated that Education (kindergarten through university) receives over 60% of the budget. This is true when you only consider General Funds. When you consider the TOTAL (i.e., General, Special State and Federal Funds) FY 2010 state budget, education received $5.7B (29%) of appropriations. We explain Education’s piece of the budget pie in this issue of the MPE Journal.

In Every Issue
President’s Message
Page 4
Rhonda Travis

Message from the Executive Director
Page 5
Judy Rhodes

Member Spotlight
Page 6
Star Wars characters help to kick off Lester Elementary’s AR Program

Member Spotlight
Page 11

Mississippi Department of Education News
Page 18

Community College News
Page 19

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning News
Page 20

Features
From our Board of Directors
Page 8
Nykela Jackson

USM Children’s Center
Page 7
For over 35 years, Children’s Center is an invaluable resource for children and their families in South Mississippi.

Recruitment Recognitions
Page 9
MPE recognizes members recruiting 5 or more new members

How A Bill Becomes A Law
Page 17

Dr. Tom Burnham Selected as State Superintendent
Page 21
Happy fall and winter, MPE members. I think this is my favorite time of year since school is steadily cruising along and tons of things are going on. I know that the budget is heavy on all our minds. Again, I must say that I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that the professional educators in Mississippi will succeed and continue to provide the quality education we always have, regardless of budget cuts. Money may be short, but our creativity and dedication is not. Each year at the beginning of school, my Superintendent always emphasizes the fact that the teacher is what determines the success of the student. My hope is that all the professionals who are charged with the daunting task of influencing and educating the children of Mississippi will renew their dedication and love for that which they do.

I know it is love for and dedication to our craft that keeps us going. One of my favorite aspects about being a teacher is getting to mingle with other teachers. It is during this time that I get to meet and share ideas, solutions, and stories with those who care about the same things as I do. My school is conducting SACS this month. We have prepared, sweated, and made life for the ones chosen to spearhead this task completely crazy. But we have also looked at ourselves under a microscope and reevaluated what we do that works, and what we do that may not. When the SACS team arrived, it was made up of principals, teachers, counselors and retired educators from all areas of the state. Getting to interact with these people reminded me that no matter where I travel, within Mississippi or outside the state, we educators are our own special breed. We think alike, worry alike, and hope alike. One of the members, James Raborn, principal at Forest County AHS, has been in education a long time. When asked about retirement, he made a comment that I think is important to remember. He said, “This business of education is fun. If you can’t have fun, then you need to get out.” Of course he did not mean that everyday is a trip to the fair, but he is right. Education is so full of experiences, successes, failures, and miracles, we should look forward to what the day or week will hold.

MPE wishes our new State Superintendent, Dr. Tom Burnham, great success. Won’t it be great to give him the support of 10,000 members in 2010! We are very close. Please remember to get the word out about all the benefits of MPE. If you need any materials or supplies, please do not hesitate to call the MPE office. I hope you make plans now to attend the annual convention on April 10th. I look forward to seeing you there.

MPE IS LOOKING FOR BUILDING REPRESENTATIVES!

If you are interested in being the building representative for your school, contact the state office at: stephanie@mpe.org or (800)523-0269
This issue of the MPE Journal focuses on the state budget process and education's share of the budget. I hope you found our five-part series of emails that we sent out in late October and November on this subject to be informative and helpful in your understanding of the budget process, as well as budget reductions. As we potentially face additional budget cuts and as the 2010 Legislative Session approaches, it is important that we all become well-informed of how the state budget process works, who makes the decisions, and the impact of those decisions, especially on our kindergarten through university classrooms and students.

Day-to-day references are often made regarding Education's share of the budget with it normally being stated that Education (kindergarten through university) receives over 60% of the budget. This is true when you only consider General Funds. As explained in this issue, when you consider the TOTAL (i.e., General, Special State and Federal Funds) $19.8B FY 2010 state budget, education received $5.7B (29%) of appropriations.

Because of the economic situation, this will be a difficult spring and legislative session. Legislators and the Governor have a formidable task in front of them. With my many years of working with the Mississippi Legislature, I have come to respect the work that the members do on behalf of Mississippians. I encourage you to share your opinion with your local legislators, as well as the Lieutenant Governor and Governor. They value your input and your opinion. Remember that one of MPE’s founding principles is PROFESSIONALISM, so please be concise and professional in your communications.

There is a lot of excitement in Mississippi’s K-12 education system. In addition to the State Board of Education naming Dr. Tom Burnham as Mississippi’s new State Superintendent of Education on November 3rd, schools and districts received their accountability ratings in accordance with the new state accountability model in November. This new model provides communities with the information necessary to know if their schools are competing at, above or below the national average. While we are extremely proud of Mississippi’s approximately 170 Star or High Performing schools and 20 Star and High Performing districts, Mississippi has a lot of work to do. MPE participated in the MDE’s Recovery School District Planning Retreat to identify what we as a state should be doing to assist the approximately 200 schools and 50 districts rated “At Risk of Failing,” “Low Performing” or “Failing.”

Our MPE family continues to grow. As of November 16th, we have 8,971 members. I am especially proud to tell you that we have the largest student membership we have ever had with 647 student members. They are our future and we are very excited that they joined MPE. MPE continues to be the fastest growing organization for professional educators in the state. A major reason for our growth is that we provide twice the professional liability protection ($2M) compared to other organizations ($1M) for one third of the cost - $120 versus $408 (for certified professional). Encourage a friend or co-worker to join our family today!
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MPE Member Invaded by Star Wars Characters

Lester Elementary in Jackson kicked off their 2009-2010 AR (Accelerated Reader) Program with an official visit from several Star Wars characters, including an imperial officer, a storm trooper, a tusken raider and Darth Vader himself! The Star Wars characters will return throughout the school year to check on students’ progress and to host a celebration at the end of the school year for the class that earns the most points. Thanks to Randolph Costilow, a 2nd grade teacher at Lester and MPE member since 1998, for sharing this great event with us!

MPE 2010 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 a graduate degree at a college or university in 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 2010-2011 school year
- Applicant is accepted and enrolled in graduate coursework 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 12, 2010.

Hitt Leads Counselors

Gwen Hitt, counselors’ coordinator and district test coordinator for Covington County Schools, is the 2009-2010 President of the Mississippi Counseling Association. The Mississippi Counseling Association has over 1200 members and serves counselors in a variety of work settings including, but not limited to: mental health agencies, private practices, state employment offices, and military education offices.
For over thirty-five years, the Children’s Center for Communication and Development at the University of Southern Mississippi has provided early intervention, team-based services for infants, toddlers and preschoolers with disabilities. The center is an invaluable resource for children and their families in South Mississippi and is a major factor in building statewide capacity for early intervention for children with disabilities.

The Children Center’s mission is “to provide communicative and developmental transdisciplinary services to infants, toddlers, and preschoolers while educating, training and supporting families, university students and professionals, and while conducting academic research to develop and support the services modeled.” But The Children’s Center’s mantra is “Building a Legacy of Excellence for Children with Disabilities through Creative Services, Innovative Research, and Professional Training.”

The Center currently services approximately eighty children (birth - five years) and families from fifteen to twenty counties. At any time, forty to sixty children are on the Center’s waiting list.

The Center serves children who have communicative disorders coupled with other developmental disabilities, such as Down Syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, Rett Syndrome, traumatic brain injury, aphasia and rare syndromes. The Center uses a transdisciplinary approach to customize educational plans to meet the comprehensive needs of each child and family. This approach includes speech pathology, audiology, special education, behavior therapy, physical therapy and occupational therapy. Seventy-five percent of the children are served on the Center’s campus, while twenty-five percent are served in their homes due to their young age and/or medical status.

The Center is a clinical division of the Southern Miss Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences in the College of Health and serves a critical training and research role. The Center provides intense pre-professional training to Southern Miss undergraduate and graduate students from as many as nine disciplines. Community college students and students from other universities, as well as teachers and clinicians from Mississippi’s public schools, also receive training at the Center.

Margaret Buttross Brinegar, director of The Children’s Center, enjoys seeing the fruits of The Center’s labor. Whether seeing their small alumni return to Southern Miss as college students, or working in local businesses, or simply being able to enjoy the company of family at church or other outings, Buttross-Brinegar and the team are driven by each success of each child. Just recently, a student who earned her Master’s degree in Speech and Hearing Sciences at Southern Miss returned to the center where she had started at age two. Brinegar shares, “She couldn’t speak at all when she came to us. She majored in Speech-Language Pathology as a way to give back. All of our children give back.”

CHILDREN’S CENTER FOR COMMUNICATION AND DEVELOPMENT IS SHINING JEWEL

(Garrett Sullivan, Maci McIlwain, Noble Ulmer, and Ella Grace Hall enjoy music time at the Center)

(Brinkley Allen receives her Preschool Diploma in May 2008 from Dr. Brett Kemker, Associate Provost at USM)
From our Board of Directors

Shopping for Grants

State and local school districts’ budgets have taken a critical blow from the recession in the national economy. Funding for education is on the chopping block, leaving us overwhelmed and scrambling for ideas to cut costs. Although we are experiencing difficult times, we must be creative in our endeavors to generate the support we need to effectively educate our students. To compensate for budget cuts, we must aggressively pursue grants.

Grants are like shoes; you could never have enough of them! The motivation to apply for a grant is that one can potentially receive funding for projects, field trips, equipment, and programs. The resistance emerges due to time constraints, unfamiliarity with grant jargon, and grant writing phobia. Knowing where to begin and learning a few grant writing basics will help educators overcome these obstacles.

Generate an idea

The initial step is to develop an idea that meets the needs of the beneficiaries: students and school. Stephen Covey stated that, “We should begin with the end in mind.” Establishing goals and intentions in the beginning gives us direction and guides us in creating our mission, objectives, and budget. It is easier to start with an idea and then search for support. The key point to remember is that funders do not care about what your wants and desires are, but rather, what your students need.

Get familiar with grant jargon

To become familiar with guidelines and grant writing, the best advice is to research sample grants that have been funded in the past. Other approaches include researching grant writing tips and attending grant writing workshops.

Get on your computer and locate grant opportunities

Funding agencies are not secretive. They want people to qualify for their grants. It is very important to research funding opportunities thoroughly and have multiple options. To begin your search check out websites such as: www.grantsalert.com, www.grants.gov, www.foundationcenter.org, www.grants4teachers.com, and www.donorschoose.org. Major corporations, car motor companies, and businesses offer grants for educators. A quick search name of a corporation/business, followed by the inclusion of grant or community outreach in their search menu will reveal their grant applications and guidelines. Businesses such as Wal-Mart, Target, Best Buy, Office Depot, Lowe’s, Home Depot, Mississippi Power, AT&T, and Toyota are some examples of corporations who support education. Celebrities also offer funding (Michael Jordan, Rosie O’Donnell, Tiger Woods, Oprah, and many more). Once the search has been narrowed down, contact the donors to get information about the type of grants they have funded in the past. It is critical that the grant is tailored to match the donor’s intentions in order to increase the chances of receiving funding. One important point to remember is that most school districts require teachers to get permission to receive funding over a certain amount. Be sure to talk with your district office before proceeding in this process.

Get pumped about the grant writing experience

Make this process a team effort. Collaborating with colleagues to help with researching, writing, proofreading, and planning not only reduces your workload but allows for more creativity and multiple perspectives.

Tell a good story and use hard data to build your explanation. Let donors know exactly what the problem is and how their assistance will help solve it in an engaging way. Follow the guidelines directly and include all required documents. When donors read your proposal they should understand your goals and mission and how funding assistance would enhance your needs. Following these simple tips will help you move items from your wish list to your shopping cart so you can proceed to checkout.

Nykela Jackson
Assistant Professor of Education
William Carey University
The following article was submitted to MPE on September 26, 2009 in response to an article in the last edition of the MPE Journal, “Everything I Know About Discipline I Learned on a School Bus,” written by MPE Board member, Dr. Benny Hornsby.

Dr. Hornsby,

I so enjoyed reading your article in the fall MPE journal. I drive a school bus and teach Kindergarten at Hatley Elementary in Monroe County. This is my first year to have my own route. (I didn’t know that I was going to have to substitute bus drive for a year to “work up” to a bus driving position.)

I drive about 25 minutes in the morning before I have my first stop, and I really enjoy watching the world wake up. I have seen more sun rises in the last two months than I have seen all of my life. With all of the rain we are having, I have seen quite a few rainbows, too.

Anyway, I completed my Master’s degree from MUW in May 2008. Dr. Lillie Smith, who was one of my professors there, lovesJacob Kounin and referred to “withitness” often. One of my presentations in one of her classes was on William Glasser. I have tried to use their theories on my school bus as well as in my classroom. My older brother said it best when he told me that I had two different classrooms.

I still struggle with discipline as I learn more about my bus students. Most of them live in poverty and are being raised in step families. I am still trying to earn their trust and respect.

I gave a copy of your article to my bus supervisor as well as Russell Thomas, our transportation director. A teacher intern at our school will be seeing Dr. Smith at the “W” in October and will be taking her a copy of the article as well.

You really spoke to my heart. Thanks for your time,

Beth Livingston
Transportation Specialist

MPE would like to thank and congratulate the following members who recruited 5 or more new members since July 1st. Those who recruited 5 new members received a free year’s membership. Members with 6 or more recruits also received a rewards check.

Mary Jo Britton, Wayne County - 6 new members
Janina Brock, USM - 6 new student members
Janet Carlock, Franklin County - 5 new members
Steve Clyburn, Lawrence County - 6 new members
Terry Coffey, Lowndes County - 5 new members
Becky Hayes, Lowndes County - 5 new members
Dr. June Hornsby, William Carey University - 9 new members
Dr. Mike McNeece, Greenville - 5 new members
Dr. Barry Morris, William Carey University - 20 new members
Dal Murray, Columbia - 8 new members
Tammie Payne, Poplarville - 7 new members
Dr. Stacy Reeves, USM - 15 new student members
Mary “Doc” Sennett, Rankin County - 9 new members
Julia Wilkinson, Franklin County - 14 new members

Recognitions

Recruitment bonus checks are awarded at the end of each quarter, with the 1st quarter beginning July 1, 2009 and ending September 30, 2009. Free memberships will be credited towards next year’s membership.
Mark your calendars now to attend MPE’s 2010 Convention on Saturday, April 10th at the Jackson Hilton. We promise engaging speakers and the latest information regarding Mississippi’s new accountability system and consolidation, as well as the budget. CEUs will be provided on-site for a minimal fee. Do not miss this opportunity for quality professional development, updates on MPE activities and great fellowship.
Dr. Stacy Reeves, MPE’s 2006 President, and Dr. Pokey Sanford, MPE’s 2008 Convention keynote speaker, co-authored an article entitled “Rubrics for the Classroom: Assessments for Students and Teachers” which was published in the fall 2009 *Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*. The Delta Kappa Gamma Society International is a professional honor society of women educators that promotes professional and personal growth of its members and excellence in education.

The article reviewed teachers’ assessment of all learners in the classroom as they produce written pieces while offering encouragement and motivation in the learning process. When focusing on assessment tools, understanding and developing the right type of rubric may help classroom teachers show growth and development in their students’ writing. The article concludes that “Rubrics can help measure student performances beyond the data that can be collected by standardized, high-stakes tests. Good rubrics are simple to design when the criteria or characteristics are in place, and rubrics measure teaching by helping the teacher to focus instruction on specific elements or characteristics.” You may view the article in its entirety at [www.deltakappagamma.net](http://www.deltakappagamma.net).

Reeves and Sanford serve as Associate Professors of Education at the University of Southern Mississippi.

MPE President-elect Dr. Barry Morris was named Dean of William Carey University’s School of Education in November. Dr. Morris had served as Interim Dean since August. Prior to this, he served as Chair of the Department of Education. He joined the William Carey faculty in 2005 and has his Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of South Florida. A MPE member since 2005, Dr. Morris has served on our Board of Directors since 2006. Congratulations, Dr. Morris!

Vince Jordan was recognized by the State Board of Education at its September board meeting as a 2009 Administrator of the Year Finalist, representing the first congressional district. Mississippi’s Administrator of the Year recognizes administrators who exhibit a superior ability to inspire instructors, who possess exemplary leadership capabilities and are active members of the local community. Jordan serves as Principal of Myrtle Attendance Center in Union County. Vince joined MPE in 2005. Congratulations, Vince!
Perception vs. Reality:

What share of the state budget does education receive?

As the 2010 Mississippi Legislative Session approaches, it is important that we all become well-informed of the state budget process, how it works, and who makes the decisions. This article will review information we included in our five-part series of emails this fall regarding Mississippi’s budget process and its impact on education.

State Revenue Sources and Budget Cut Exemptions

There are 3 major categories of revenue that make up the “entire” state budget: Federal, Special State, and General. For FY 2010 (July 1, 2009-June 30, 2010) the total state budget appropriated (prior to budget cuts) was $19.8B, of which $4.8B is General Funds, $10.2B is Federal Funds, and $4.8B is other Special State taxes and fees. We have posted Mississippi’s enacted FY 2010 budget in the MPE News section of our website (http://www.mpe.org/DisplayNewsArticle.asp). Please visit this site to review the actual appropriated amounts.

• FEDERAL FUNDS - $10.2B in FY 2010 (52%)

  Federal funds are funds initially appropriated by the U.S. Congress for states and are generally program and agency specific. Therefore, with few exceptions, neither the Governor nor state legislators have significant authority over Federal funds. These funds are however, appropriated by the legislature for specific agencies and programs. The larger portions of federal funds go to Medicaid and the Department of Human Services, with other significant funding levels for economic development, emergency management, education, and transportation. These funds fund specific programs or enhance state programs.

• SPECIAL STATE FUNDS (non-federal) - $4.83B in FY 2010 (24%)

  Special fund agencies generally operate from funds designated by statute to run such agencies. The largest is the Department of Transportation with funds being derived from state tax on gasoline and diesel fuel. The Secretary of State’s Office operates from fees collected for services provided. These funds and agencies are not referred to as “general fund” agencies, and therefore, although funds are generated either through state taxes or fees, are not generally considered when references are made to “share of the state budget”. These funds total annually more than the appropriated “general fund”.

• GENERAL FUNDS - $4.75B in FY 2010 (24%)

  This is the most commonly referenced portion of the state budget and is actually the smallest portion. Yet this is where basic services of education, corrections, public health, debt service, etc. are funded. The major sources of revenue are sales tax, personal and corporate income tax, tobacco tax and gaming fees and taxes. Although petroleum tax is labeled a general fund tax and totals over $450M, this tax is diverted prior to appropriation and is not considered a part of the normal “General Fund” budget.

These three categories total $19.8B and represent the state appropriated budget. While the state (Governor and Legislature) has little control over Federal funds, the Special and General portions are totally controlled by state statutes and state appropriations. Therefore, the part of the budget funded with state dollars is more like $10B, rather than the $4.8B commonly referred to as the state budget.
**Other State Revenues Not Appropriated:** In excess of $800M in State Tax Revenues, including portions of state sales tax, gaming fees and taxes, oil and gas severance tax, petroleum tax and others are transferred directly to local governments and other entities and are not included in the state appropriated budget.

**Budget Cut Exemptions:** When actual revenue collections fall short of the budgeted amounts, the Governor is mandated by law to reduce or “cut” agency budgets. As Federal Funds are not derived from state sources, they may not be cut, which means that 50% of the budget may not be reduced. Only State Source funds (i.e., State Special and General Funds) may be cut. However, state law (MISS.CODE Section 27-104-13) provides for some State Special Funds to be exempt from budget cuts, which means that several agencies are exempt. Such exemptions include college tuition, hunting and fishing license fees, and the Department of Transportation’s approximately $600M State Special Funds appropriation.

Therefore, when you consider the $800M plus in state revenues that is not included in the appropriation process because it is transferred to local governments AND the $600M appropriation to the Department of Transportation, you have a total in excess of $1.4B in state revenues which are not subject to budget reductions.

**The TOTAL State Budget (All Sources)**

Day-to-day references are often made regarding Education’s share of the budget with it normally being stated

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**MISSISSIPPI FY 2010 STATE BUDGET: $19.8B (GENERAL, SPECIAL STATE AND FEDERAL FUNDS)**

- **All Education:** $5.7B (29%)
  - **K-12 Public Education:** $3.4B (17%)
  - **Higher Education:** $2.3B (12%)
- **Transportation:** $1.2B (6%)
- **Public & Mental Health:** $1B (5%)
- **Economic Development:** $1.9B (9%)
- **Social Welfare:** $6.1B (31%)
- **Special Fund Agencies:** $900M (5%)
- **Other:** $3B (15%)

* Other: Legislative; Judiciary; Executive; Fiscal Affairs; Agri & Commerce; IHL Agri; Conservation; Corrections; Military, Police & Vet Affairs; Arts; Local Assistance; Debt Service; Reappropriations; Special Fund Reappropriations.

**NOTE:** Higher Education includes community colleges and universities.

**SOURCE:** Data provided by Mississippi Economic Policy Center.
that Education (kindergarten through university) receives over 60% of the budget. This is true when you only consider General Funds. **When you consider the TOTAL (i.e., General, State Special and Federal Funds) $19.8B FY 2010 state budget, education received $5.7B (29%) of appropriations.**

**State Sources**

Mississippi’s $19.8B FY 2010 budget includes $4.75B (24%) of General Funds and $4.83B (24%) of State Special Funds. Basic state services of education, corrections, public health, debt service, etc. are funded by General Fund revenue derived from Sales Tax, Income Tax and Gaming collections. State Special Funds are generated either through states taxes or fees and are designated by statute to run Special Fund agencies, such as the Department of Transportation.

While neither the Governor nor state legislators have significant authority over Federal funds, they do have authority over General and Special State Funds. These funds are appropriated by the Legislature, with appropriations either approved or vetoed by the Governor. Although Special State Funds may be designated by statute for certain agencies, the Legislature has authority to revise statutes and set policy, including the allocation of state revenues.

Education (kindergarten through university) received 48% of the State Source Funds (i.e., General and State Special funds) appropriated for FY 2010. K-12 re-
ceived $2.5B and higher education received $2.1B for a total of $4.6 of the $9.6B appropriated.

State Source funds reflected in the above chart do not include over $800M in direct transfers to local governments outside of appropriations, but do include the Department of Transportation’s $600M State Special Fund appropriation, which is not subject to budget cuts. Thus, in excess of $1.4B in state revenues is not subject to budget reductions.

**General Fund Sources**

24% of Mississippi’s FY 2010 $19.8B billion budget is funded through General Funds. Basic state services of education, corrections, public health, debt service, etc. are funded by General Fund revenue derived from sales tax, income tax and gaming fees and taxes. The Legislature has direct appropriation authority of these funds and, therefore, controls the use of General Funds to support state services.

Education (kindergarten through university) received 62% of the General Funds appropriated for FY 2010. K-12 received $2.1B in General Funds, while higher education received $820M for a total of $2.9B of the total $4.8B in General Funds appropriated. General Funds support the Mississippi Adequate Education Program (MAEP), as well as general support and operations of Mississippi’s community colleges and universities.

Most state budget decisions commonly focus only on the...
General Fund portion of the state budget and give an incomplete picture of the state budget process. Education makes up 29% of the TOTAL state budget, 48% of the State Sources budget and 62% of the General Fund budget.

Budget Cuts

The Legislature convenes each January through April or May in regular session to consider legislation, including appropriation bills for state agencies for the succeeding fiscal year which begins July 1st. As with this fiscal year, revenue collections may not come in as expected to fund state operations, which means cuts must be made to agency budgets to balance the overall budget. Governor Barbour announced budget cuts in early September of $172 million, with $158 million of the cuts being in education – kindergarten through university. With a continuing decline in revenue, the Governor indicated on October 14th that it could take up to a total of 7% in cuts to balance the budget, meaning education could expect another 2% cut.

The Working Cash Stabilization Fund, commonly referred to as the Rainy Day Fund, provides funds for 1) short-term cash flow needs and 2) fiscal year revenue shortfalls. In the second case, the Rainy Day Fund may be used for the purpose of covering any projected deficits that may occur as a result of revenue shortfalls. The Governor may transfer no more than $50M from the fund for such purposes in any one fiscal year. Earlier this year, the Rainy Day Fund had a balance of approximately $360M, but $20M was used to cover FY 2009 shortfalls and $95M was used for FY 2010 support, leaving the Rainy Day Fund with a balance of approximately $245M.

Mississippi CODE Section 27-104-13 governs state agency budget reductions:

- The State Fiscal Officer, who is appointed by the Governor, may reduce agency budgets by up to 5% any time he finds that funds will not be available or if he finds that requested expenditures are not authorized by law.

- The Governor may direct the State Fiscal Officer to transfer funds from the Rainy Day Fund to supplement general fund revenue shortfalls. However, this is left strictly up to the Governor and is not required.

- If, at the end of October, or at the end of any month thereafter of any fiscal year, revenue collections fall below 98% of the adopted general fund revenue estimate, the Governor may direct the State Fiscal Officer to reduce agency budgets in an amount necessary to balance the budget.

- All agency budgets, except those exempted, shall be cut by 5% before any agency is cut in excess of 5%. All cuts above 5% must be uniform across state agencies.

Summary

Given Mississippi’s fiscal climate of revenue shortfalls and budget cuts, should we reexamine the allocation of state resources? Should we do away with the concept of Special State funds and treat all state generated fees and taxes as general fund receipts regardless of what entity receives the benefit of these fees and taxes? Should we have exemptions to the budget cutting process? If education is truly Mississippi’s priority – and the priority of our state’s policy makers – shouldn’t education receive funding even in times of economic stress? Even in times of limited resources, allocation of those resources must be prioritized and allocated to what is most important.

Sources:

Mississippi Economic Policy Center (2009), data analysis.

Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (January 2009), Mississippi: A Fiscal Summary.

Mississippi Joint Legislative Budget Committee (July 20, 2009), State of Mississippi Budget Fiscal Year 2010: Appropriations Made by the Legislature for Fiscal Year 2010 Compared With Fiscal Year 2009 Appropriations.
How a bill becomes law in Mississippi

If bill passes, returns to the House of origin

Bill Passes Both Houses (identical Form)

Bill Passes Both Houses (Different Form) and House of origin accepts changes

Bill sent to Conference Committee

Conference committee reaches compromise and files conference report

If both Houses adopt Conference Report

Bill becomes law if:
1. Signed by Governor
2. Not signed by Governor by deadline
3. Voted but overridden

Enrolled Bill sent to Governor

2010 Legislative Session Key Contacts and Dates

Lt. Governor Phil Bryant
601-359-3200, pbryant@senate.ms.gov

House Speaker Billy McCoy
601-359-3300, wmccoy@house.ms.gov

Senate Appropriations: Senator Alan Nunnelee
601-359-3250, anunnelee@senate.ms.gov

601-359-3340, jstringer@house.ms.gov

Senate Education: Senator Videt Carmichael
601-359-3244, vcarmichael@senate.ms.gov

House Education: Rep. Cecil Brown
601-359-3330, cbrown@house.ms.gov

Senate Universities & Colleges: Senator Doug Davis
601-359-2220, ddavis@senate.ms.gov

House Universities & Colleges: Rep. Kelvin Buck
601-359-3331, kbuck@house.ms.gov

Governor’s Education Policy Advisor Johnny Franklin
601-359-3150, JFranklin@governor.state.ms.us

January 5  2010 Session convenes
February 2  Deadline for committees to report general bills originating in own House
February 11 Deadline for floor action on general bills originating in own House
February 24 Deadline for floor action on appropriation bills originating in own House
March 2  Deadline for committees to report general bills originating in other House
March 10 Deadline for floor action on general bills originating in other House
March 16 Deadline for floor action on appropriation bills originating in other House
March 19 Deadline to concur or not concur in amendments from other House to appropriation bills
March 24 Deadline for conference reports on appropriation bills to be filed
March 25 Deadline to concur or not concur in amendments from other House to general bills
March 26 Deadline for final adoption of conference reports on appropriation bills
March 29 Deadline for conference reports on general bills to be filed
March 31 Deadline for first consideration of conference reports on general bills
April 3  Sine die (session ends)
The difference between Mississippi’s old school accountability rating system, which rated schools from Level 1 to Level 5, and the school and district accountability system being implemented this school year is like the difference between competing for a state championship and a national championship. It is just like Ole Miss and MSU football competing for state bragging rights compared to competing for national bragging rights. There is a big difference!

Under the old accountability system a school was only compared to the state average. It was not surprising then that for the last three years of the old system, 25 percent or more of schools were rated Level 5 Superior and over 50 percent were rated Level 4 or Level 5. Now, our schools and districts will be measured against schools and districts across the country.

Under the new accountability system, the highest rating, “Star,” is based on comparisons to top performing states and schools. A national standard for excellence is needed because that is the standard our students and our state are competing against. In this first year of the new standard, about four percent of schools will receive the highest rating of Star School. About 17 percent of schools will reach the next highest rating of High Performing. Both Star and High Performing schools are performing above the national average. Schools at the next level of rating, Successful, are performing anywhere from just below the Mississippi average to about the national average. About 20 percent of schools are estimated to reach the Successful level.

Schools’ ratings are based on achievement, academic growth or improvement and, the graduation rate for schools with graduates. Achievement is measured by the Quality of Distribution Index (QDI). The minimum QDI is zero and the maximum is 300. The state QDI is 149. Growth, on the other hand, is based on whether students demonstrate performance equal to or better than expected based on how they performed the previous school year.

Many of the schools that do not reach Successful and receive the status of Academic Watch are still reaching the state average or better. However, these schools may not have had the academic improvement expected. These schools have the potential to move into the Successful category with the right effort. About 25 percent of schools are in this category.

These school ratings, due to be released on November 23, 2009, may surprise some folks. However, the results are not so surprising when we realize the difference between the “old” standards for rating schools vs. the “new” standards. Even though the new expectations may seem very high for some schools, I believe our schools are up to the challenge. The state of Virginia went through an adjustment in their standards and expectations like this almost ten years ago. In 2000, just seven percent of Virginia’s schools met the highest standard; in 2009 nearly 98 percent met that standard.

I have no doubt that we can see dramatic improvement in Mississippi’s schools just like Virginia experienced. We have hard-working, dedicated teachers and administrators and talented students who are as bright and capable as students anywhere. While recognizing the difference between the old accountability ratings and these new ratings is important, it is more important for us to rally behind our “team” of students, teachers, and administrators and to help them strive for the new goals the State Board of Education has set for our state.

Rising to this challenge will require hard work, but the future of our students and our state are well worth it!

I will officially start as State Superintendent of Education at the beginning of 2010 and look forward to serving our state but most importantly serving our boys and girls as we prepare them to reach their highest potential.
It is hard to believe the fall semester will soon be wrapping up and Christmas and New Years are right around the corner! I hope everyone has had a great school year thus far.

The beginning of a new calendar year can only mean one thing—the legislative session will soon begin. It is an understatement to say that creating the FY 2011 state budget will be a challenge. During these difficult economic times, I hope members of the Legislature realize community colleges are helping to grow the state’s economy, prosperity, and tax revenue. Our colleges are providing the valuable workforce training along with academic and career and technical education that help Mississippians find high-skilled jobs, and we need the resources to continue doing our job.

In previous editions of the MPE Journal, I have briefly mentioned one of the more important roles community colleges have—providing adult education to our citizens.

Education at all levels is so important to our state. It is well known that a direct relationship exists between how much education a person has and how much money he or she will earn over a lifetime. Even though there are countless studies and statistics talking about the importance of education, the sad reality is that more than 400,000 adult Mississippian lack a high school diploma. This is where community colleges step in, by offering Adult Basic Education classes and GED preparation. Adult Basic Education programs offer adult education skills training that includes an array of instruction such as English as a Second Language, GED preparation, lower level literacy instruction, parenting skills, employability skills, life coping skills, and basic skills training.

During FY 2009, 22,606 adults received a total of 1,054,536 cumulative student instructional hours.

Community colleges take this training seriously. One of our top legislative priorities the past few years has been funding for Dropout Recovery. With support from the Legislature, more than 5,300 students passed GED tests during FY 2009 at a Mississippi community college. This is an increase of more than 500 from the previous year. These people are now able to further their education and better their lives.

The instructors who teach Adult Basic Education are some of the most dedicated people in the state and are often under-appreciated for the services they provide to our citizens. Thank you for the job you do!
There are those who are able only to deliver information from one source to another, and then there are those who are able to tell a great story.

Great storytellers have tirelessly studied their characters and plot. They know their audience, and they draw listeners in by making the story they are telling emotional and personal to everyone in the room. Above all, great storytellers believe in the story they are telling.

We in education need to become better storytellers.

There are very tough economic times ahead for all of us. Education at all levels has already seen a five percent cut this fiscal year, and with revenue continuing to fall below projections, another cut is likely on the way. Some economists believe the worst may be yet to come. In 2012, when the dollars quit flowing from the federal stimulus package, education could take a tremendous hit.

Balancing the books for the next several years will obviously require us to change the way we do business now. We will have to get better at analyzing the numbers and figuring out how to do more, with fewer resources, in order to minimize the effect the recession has on our teaching and research. We will have to get better at being creative and ensuring that every single penny is spent in a prudent way that will make the most difference.

But there is another softer, more subtle skill that we will need to exercise and perfect: Our storytelling abilities.

I have often said that no matter the question, education is the answer. For Mississippi’s economy to grow, we must have a better educated citizenry. There must be more early educational opportunities for children to help prepare them for Kindergarten, more of our students have to graduate from our high schools, and more adult Mississippians must make the decision to pursue a higher degree. The workforce our economy demands depends on increasing these statistics; the futures of our citizens and our state hang in the balance.

As educators, you know all this better than anyone because you have been there to see one student realize success, and another with the same potential get lost in the system. You have been there to see how both outcomes affect individual lives, communities and the state. Our constituents — legislators, parents, alumni and the general public — need to hear these stories that only you can tell. They need to believe in your story. We have to make it emotional and personal.

In good and bad economic times, we, as educators, have a responsibility to look at the cold, hard facts and to make decisions on how best to allocate the resources we are given. But we also have a responsibility to tell a compelling story about the possibilities that come about as a result of the teaching, learning and research accomplished in our classrooms and laboratories. Only then can we help our listeners truly understand that the only way out of these tough economic times and on to a better, brighter future in Mississippi is by investing in education at all levels and refusing to waver in that support.
DR. TOM BURNHAM SELECTED AS STATE SUPERINTENDENT

The State Board of Education unanimously chose Dr. Tom Burnham as Mississippi’s new State Superintendent of Education on November 3. Dr. Burnham is returning to this position in which he previously served from 1992 to 1997. Prior to being named State Superintendent, he was Dean of the School of Education at the University of Mississippi. Burnham’s professional record also includes serving as superintendent in both Biloxi and the Henderson County Public Schools in North Carolina.

Having served in the Mississippi Department of Education with Dr. Burnham, MPE Executive Director Judy Rhodes is excited about his being named State Superintendent of Education. “Tom Burnham is a proven leader who is dedicated to doing what is best for the educational advancement of Mississippi’s children. He is a solid educator who believes in proven practices. “

A native of Puckett, Dr. Burnham holds a doctorate in curriculum and instruction from Delta State University. He earned both a master’s in educational leadership and a bachelor’s in business administration from Mississippi College.

Blue Ribbon Schools

Congratulations to our MPE members and their co-workers at the following Mississippi schools named 2009 No Child Left Behind-Blue Ribbon Schools by the U.S. Department of Education:

Center Hill Elementary, 
DeSoto County School District

D’Iberville Elementary, 
Harrison County School District

Long Beach Middle School, 
Long Beach School District

Rankin Elementary, 
Tupelo Public School District
Absolute Integrity.
Boundless Enthusiasm.
Consummate Quality.

This is a lot to ask from anyone, but you should anyway. And expect to receive it. Particularly from the company you entrust with your risk management. Ross & Yerger has provided these ABC’s and much more since 1860. Whatever you own that might encounter risk, we have a product with a plan to protect your interests. You expect no less from us, and we intend to give you more as time goes by.

Special Accounts Division
Joey Hutto, Vice President
jhutto@rossandyerger.com

Ross & Yerger
INSURANCE SINCE 1860

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Tupelo (662) 844-0222
(800) 844-5500

Imes have changed but some things don’t. Long-term care is still a family issue. The majority of persons needing long-term care services are still being taken care of at home and not in a nursing home. What you need to consider however is the probable consequence living a long life and needing care creates for your family and finances. **Long-term care is not only about you. It’s about your family.**

Long-Term Care Insurance pays for all types of care in nursing homes and assisted living facilities, but more importantly it pays for care where you want it most – **at home. Insurance pays to help your family take care of you.**

Long-Term Care Insurance protects your family because you may develop an illness that will require long-term care.

**Myths & Facts About Long-Term Care**

**Myth** – We’re living longer. Why be concerned with long-term care?
**Fact** – Living longer means living with illnesses that used to be fatal. When you live longer, you get sick – when you get sick you need care.

**Myth** – Most people who need long-term care receive care in a nursing home.
**Fact** – Most long-term care is provided by family members. Long-term care insurance doesn’t replace what families do. It builds on an existing infrastructure of support allowing the caregivers to provide the care better and longer.

**Myth** – Long-Term Care Insurance is for people who are in retirement age.
**Fact** – While many retired people have taken advantage of a long-term care insurance program, the average long-term care insurance purchaser is age 56.

**Myth** – A good retirement portfolio is self-insurance against the cost of long-term care.
**Fact** – For pennies on the dollar, a long-term care insurance policy can protect a retirement portfolio from the devastating cost of long-term care.

The MPE Long-Term Care Insurance program works to provide members with good advice and discounts of 5%-10% when insurance is purchased through the program. Policies are underwritten by John Hancock and Transamerica Life Insurance Company, leaders in the long-term care industry.

**More Facts about long-term care**

- Costs – In Mississippi, home health care can range in cost from $27,000 per year, care in assisted living residences from $24,000 and nursing home care exceeds $58,000.
- Planning – Most financial advisors, attorneys, and CPAs now consider long-term care insurance the BEST protection against the high costs of long-term care.
- Government programs – Medicaid pays for long-term care MOSTLY in nursing homes, seldom at home and you MUST spend down your assets to qualify for care.

**Consider the alternative.**

With MPE Members’ Discounted Long-Term Care Insurance Program, as medical needs change, you and your loved ones can
- remain at home longer with in-home care.
- have greater independence with assisted living.
- gain maximum protection with nursing home care.

For information, please return the postage-paid reply on page 17 or call (800)734-6078

**Work With the Best!**

Associated insurance professionals are the best in the business and endorsed by MPE. Long-Term Care Insurance is their specialty.
**Why MPE?**

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2009-2010 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional with liability insurance</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>$408* - 444*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couples with liability insurance</td>
<td>$200</td>
<td>-NA-</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-certified or part-time with insurance</td>
<td>$60</td>
<td>$204* - $216.50*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Student Teacher with insurance</td>
<td>$14</td>
<td>$10* - $21*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired Educator without insurance</td>
<td>$10</td>
<td>$10* - $60*</td>
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Professional liability protection of $2 million with $3 million maximum (other organizations provide only $1 million with $3 million maximum)

Up to $10,000 for legal assistance related to employment or professional matters

$10,000 in accidental death & dismemberment coverage (one organization offers as an optional benefit at an additional cost and one provides AD&D benefits to new members for one year)

$2,500 assault related property damage (5x the coverage of another organization)

Only organization to provide identity theft coverage with membership

Graduate & Undergraduate Scholarships awarded annually

Unlimited professional advice available 24 hours per day/7 days per week (included with membership)

Every dollar of your dues stays in Mississippi for your benefit! MPE does not utilize dues to support political candidates.

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**Mississippi Professional Educators**

MPE Journal

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