Meet the Mississippi State Board of Education
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Mississippi Professional Educators

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MPE Journal - Fall 2021
MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Tamra Mills

Never underestimate the power of a genuine “thank you.” The older I get, the more I know this to be true. Life threw us a curveball last year. You didn’t ask for it, but so many of you figured out how to make it work. I believe a genuine “thank you” is in order.

Even though I wouldn’t have chosen the path of this last year, there are a few specific silver linings that I am grateful to have experienced. I saw teachers and administrators work together to make a really difficult situation better for students. From scheduling changes to finding new and creative ways to handle breakfast and lunch, you figured it out. From learning how to teach virtually to policing masks and social distancing, you figured it out. Thank you!

“Great teachers build great connections.” I read this sentence recently in an article. Although this idea is not an earth-shattering new concept, it did cause me to pause. Yes, great teachers do build great connections. I saw firsthand many teachers go above and beyond to connect with students in very nontraditional ways. Thank you!

Many of you were “forced” to learn new technology and tools that were challenging, to say the least. I believe this to be another silver lining. Good teachers are dedicated to being lifelong learners. It wasn’t always easy, but your efforts do not go unnoticed. Thank you!

I tell people all the time that I have the best job on the planet. The thing is, I really mean it. As teachers, it is very important that we promote our profession. So much in our profession can be challenging. Why not do our part to change the challenges to opportunities? As professionals, it is important that we recruit others that are potentially considering education as a career path.

My daughter chose education as her career path. I couldn’t be prouder. I want to encourage you to be proud of the profession you chose. There are so many perks to this job. Celebrate them! We get to mold, shape, and influence a whole generation that has the potential to change the world. Wow, just think about that! To those of you encouraging others to join our “tribe” of influencers, thank you!

“Out with the old, in with the new” is a phrase generally used at the beginning of a new year or the start of something new. What if we applied this phrase to our mindset and feelings? We have talked to death about the difficulty to teaching during a pandemic. It was hard. It is not completely over. We will continue to navigate circumstances that can feel overwhelming. But, what if our negative feelings were “out?” What if a fresh new hope filled with a positive mindset was “in?” We deserve a fresh start. Our students deserve a fresh start. It may be challenging and daunting, but you did it then and you will do it again if necessary. You are not an educator for the test scores or accountability ratings. You are an educator for your students—your kids—and the impact you make on their lives and the relationships you build with them.

Never underestimate the power of a genuine “thank you.” The older I get, the more I know this to be true. Life threw us a curveball last year. You didn’t ask for it, but so many of you figured out how to make it work. I believe a genuine “thank you” is in order.

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From this teacher’s heart to yours, thank you!

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kelly Riley

As I write this article on July 21, several districts have already held new teacher orientation. Local stores have stocked the back-to-school aisles. Educators throughout our state have been planning for the 2021-22 school year for several weeks, if not months. The State Board of Education just passed two policies that call for all school districts to resume in-person instruction as the primary mode of teaching in the 2021-22 school year. This is all occurring as cases for the Delta variant of COVID-19 have skyrocketed in the past week. The Mississippi Department of Health has issued guidance for the prevention and control of COVID-19 in schools throughout our state. I find myself thinking, “Not again. Not another school year like last year.”

Regardless of what this new school year holds with these latest COVID-19 developments (or any other unforeseen crisis, for that matter), I am confident teachers, administrators, and support staff throughout Mississippi will do just as they did in the spring of 2020 and throughout the 2020-2021 school year. You will do what is best for your students. It may be challenging and daunting, but you did it then and you will do it again if necessary. You are not an educator for the test scores or accountability ratings. You are an educator for your students—your kids—and the impact you make on their lives and the relationships you build with them.

I would like to spotlight a few features in this issue of our MPE Journal:

- Given the significant number of new members to the State Board of Education in the past year, you will find brief biographical information on each member of the board on pages 12-14. They set policy and make decisions that impact classrooms throughout our state.
- Page 16 provides the application deadlines for our 2021-22 grants and scholarships. This is a great overview of some of our MPE benefits to share with your co-workers and friends if you are trying to earn a FREE membership for next year by recruiting five new MPE members this year.
- See page 20 for our 2021-22 regional trainings. Remember these trainings are free for our members and include CEUs.
- Learn more about Mississippi’s 2021 Teacher of the Year and MPE member Leslie Tally on page 8.

Your MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat in July. Among other activities and discussions, our directors met with Senator Dennis DeBar, Chairman of the Senate Education Committee, and Leah Smith of Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann’s staff, to discuss education policy and teacher salaries. The Senate will host hearings in September to discuss developing a long-range plan for increasing teacher salaries. While these hearings will be held during the school day, they will be webcasted and archived for your review. I will also attend those hearings and provide a summary of discussions via one of my weekly emails.

We are looking forward to our 2022 Best Practices Symposium featuring Dr. Todd Whitaker on Saturday, April 9, at the new Sheraton Flowood. Dr. Whitaker has written over fifty books, including the national best seller, What Great Teachers Do Differently. I hope you will save April 9 on your calendar and join us for this exciting day!

Best wishes to you and your students for a wonderful 2021-22 school year!
Down, Set, Hut!

Fall in Mississippi (and the South) is synonymous with football. Friday nights and Saturdays are spent cheering on our favorite players, cheerleaders, and band members. We celebrate their successes and mourn their failures with them. We share our accomplishments with our families and friends, teetering between arrogance and humbleness. We buy programs containing their pictures, wear pins with their faces on them, and travel the state (sometimes the country) to show our support for them.

No matter what sport our “people” participate in, there is one commonality among them—those kids who excel began with a goal/plan, participated in practices and camps to improve their performances, and sought the knowledge and expertise of others who excel in their specific sport. As we’ve begun a new school year, I encourage you to mimic our kids’ dedication, habits, and work ethic in your career. As an educator, would you?

As the year progresses, make a habit of setting goals that push yourself. Invest in yourself and your career so you grow and evolve to improve your performance, which will transfer into your students’ learning increasing. Your goals may be something as simple as wearing more professional clothing to work, making attending professional development a priority, or implementing a new teaching strategy you’ve learned. Or... stretch yourself, get out of your comfort zone and begin to pursue an advanced degree (or even your first one) or National Board Certification, mentor a new teacher, or become an advocate for teachers with your local and state lawmakers.

We set goals for our students every year, but once you become a teacher, the only person to set goals for you is YOU (and hopefully your administrator, if you’re fortunate). Teaching is HARD... those first few years, you’re just trying to stay afloat and not drown. But once you find your groove (and you will find your groove), don’t get too comfortable. Apathy and feeling comfortable are, in my opinion, two of the biggest detriments to our profession. Don’t be satisfied with mediocrity; you wouldn’t accept mediocrity from your students, would you?

Teaching is hard because it matters EVERY. SINGLE. DAY. If our craft were easy, everyone would do it. We are, in my humble opinion, the elite of the world. You were placed in your classroom with a divine appointment and purpose for those specific children. NO ONE could teach them as well as you.

Your plan to meet your goals for you (and your students) is your “playbook” for the academic year. Just as coaches refer to and adjust their playbooks after each game, be sure to revisit your plan and goals to adjust them as the year progresses. Meet all your goals you set! MAKE NEW ONES! May this year be one of goal setting, meeting, and exceeding for your students AND for you!

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TALLY HONORED AS 2021 MISSISSIPPI TEACHER OF THE YEAR

The Mississippi Department of Education named Leslie Tally, a second grade English Language Arts teacher at Lawhon Elementary in the Tupelo Public School District, the 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year in a virtual ceremony held April 29. She was one of four finalists for the award, having been selected as the Congressional District I finalist. Tally has been a member of MPE since 2013.

Tally was inspired to become a teacher by her father, a forty-seven-year educator. She began her ten-year teaching career at Lawndale Elementary in Tupelo before transitioning to Mooreville Elementary in the Lee County School District, where she taught for seven years, including four years teaching in a program that served K-5th grade students who displayed dyslexic tendencies. She provided explicit, multisensory phonics instruction to support these students with foundational reading skills. Tally then returned to the Tupelo Public School District, where she has taught second grade at Lawhon Elementary for the past two years.

Tally earned both her Bachelor of Science in Elementary Education and her Master of Science in Elementary Education from Mississippi State University. A firm believer in setting an example as a lifelong learner for her students, she earned National Board Certification in Literacy: Reading-Language Arts/Early and Middle Childhood in 2018. Tally is enrolled in the Brainspring Educator Academy, which provides continuing education opportunities for teachers with Orton-Gillingham multisensory instruction programs for the classroom. She is also pursuing certification as a Dyslexia Specialist.

When asked what advice she would give a novice teacher, Tally shared, “I believe, very strongly, in consistently pursuing opportunities to advance, not just your overall profession, but your knowledge and expertise in your craft. Education is a vast, powerful field, and there is always room to grow, whether your focus is history instruction in secondary level education, math instruction in middle grades, or foundational reading instruction in elementary grades, and so forth. I encourage all new teachers to allow their own intrinsic interests to motivate their passions in this field as well. The longevity of our profession depends on the work of passionate, knowledgeable practitioners, and our students deserve nothing less. Never tire of learning more, growing more, becoming better at what you do.”

As the 2021 Mississippi Teacher of the Year, Tally will share her expertise through presentations and activities with educators throughout the state. She will also represent Mississippi in the National Teacher of the Year competition. Tally said she is most looking forward to “the opportunity to meet, and learn from, other experts in our field throughout the next year. I know I will encounter many new experiences professionally, and I look forward to the personal growth that will come from the year ahead.”
Mary Katherine Collins
Philadelphia High School
Visual Historical Timeline Puzzle

The historical timeline puzzle project that my class was funded for was a complete success for my students this year and for years to come. Even though this is just my first year teaching, I have noticed that my students were eager to learn a timeline of events in US History. They grasped for a basic concept of who was President during this war and when that amendment to the Constitution was made, when specific events happened, and consequently, how they led to others.

Students are not able to view something and see all aspects of history at one glance. My goal was to create a stationary historical timeline to display most of the United States' historical events in one place for students to view. My students have fulfilled this goal, thus far, and the project is turning out to be truly amazing. We cannot wait to get it assembled and hung on the wall for all to see after our US History state assessment is completed!

Valerie Steele
Brandon Middle School
Equine Facilitated Learning: Normalizing after COVID-19

Thank you to MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided the addition of Equine Facilitated Learning as part of academic curriculum and social emotional learning as an innovative addition to the classroom learning. As a Special Education teacher, I see the limitations of the classroom environment for many different rulings, like ODD, ADHD, Autism, and specific learning disabilities. My students need the stimulation of a nontraditional environment that allows them to experience a holistic approach.

The addition of Equine Facilitated Learning gave the perfect opportunity to unite the standards needed for English and Science with a unique experience to process and apply what they have learned previously only on the computer. Equine Facilitated Learning is a vital addition to the curriculum to address Social Emotional Learning and close the achievement gap. With this grant, students were able to experience holistic experiential learning through participation with a live horse on campus on two different occasions with curriculum in English and Science standards that reinforced academic standards for viable innovation never seen before in the public school system.

Cecil Murphy
St. Martin Middle School
Primming the Pump for Future STEAM Leaders

Thank you MPE for funding the classroom grant that gave more students the opportunity to solve problems and work as teams to overcome obstacles. The robot kits got more students involved and more bonds between the students. The students had a great time also. Through the grant, I was able to purchase two robot kits to get more students involved in hands-on learning and friendships developed as a result.

Ashley Smith
Glade Elementary
From Chaos to Discovery

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that provides interactive learning in my classroom. The main goal of my classroom is to motivate and encourage my students to engage in their learning, as well as to collaborate with their peers. The Breakout EDU kits helped my students to interact and learn through discovery. If your students are having fun while learning, it is a win-win situation. The students will actually remember the experiences and the lessons. Since sixth grade students love to socialize, using the Breakout EDU kits was the perfect fit. Through receiving this grant, I was able to purchase three Breakout EDU kits, the interactive platform for the Breakout EDU lessons, and two virtual reality Oculus Quest goggle sets to enhance the experiences for my students.

Lisa Smith
Clara Elementary
Celebrating Reading and Earth Day with The Lorax

A very special thank you, MPE, for awarding my class this grant. Through this grant we were able to purchase a classroom set of The Lorax, art materials, and two Hydrangea plants. With this grant, my students' love for reading grew; we reviewed and taught reading skills, and celebrated Earth Day with a fun book. We completed several wonderful art activities. The students and I were able to purchase and plant two Hydrangea plants for our school in honor of Earth Day. My students and I thoroughly enjoyed The Lorax and the activities that we completed. Thank you for allowing us to celebrate reading and Earth Day with The Lorax.
The Mississippi Constitution provides that the Mississippi State Board of Education be comprised of nine members. Mississippi’s Governor is charged with appointing five of the nine members: one member from Mississippi’s Northern Supreme Court District, one member from Mississippi’s Central Supreme Court District, one member from Mississippi’s Southern Supreme Court District, one member who is employed as a school administrator, and one member who is employed as a public school teacher. The Lieutenant Governor and the Speaker of the Mississippi House of Representatives both appoint two members from the state at-large. Members serve nine-year terms unless they are appointed to fill an unexpired term of a resigning board member. The State Board added two non-voting student representatives to the board in 2019 to provide input on policy decisions that affect Mississippi public schools.

Seven of the nine voting board members have been appointed since September 2020. Given the significant number of new board members in the past year, we are providing our members with an overview of the voting members of the board who set policy and make decisions that impact classrooms throughout our state.

Meet the Mississippi State Board of Education

By Kelly Riley, MPE Executive Director

Barrett has taught K-12 students for the last eighteen years. She currently teaches English at St. Martin High School in the Jackson County School District. She received a bachelor’s degree in elementary education from the University of Southern Mississippi and a Masters, Specialist, and Doctorate from William Carey University. Her two sons attend public schools.

Mrs. Aultman served as Mayor of the City of Clinton for twenty years. She previously taught for fourteen years, primarily teaching first grade. She taught in Meridian, Hattiesburg, Gulfport, and Clinton. Aultman currently serves as Chair of the State Board of Education.

A graduate of the Harvard University Graduate School of Education, Dr. Angela Bass previously served as an administrator at a KIPP charter school in Memphis. She also taught one year at Tunica Middle School and a semester at Horn Lake High School before serving five years at Mississippi First. She is the executive director of the Mississippi Early Learning Alliance.

Mr. Jacobs is a former newspaper publisher and has extensive experience in leadership, management, and public policy. He is the publisher of The Daily Leader in Brookhaven and The Prentiss Headlight in Prentiss.

A resident of Oxford, Elam is a former college professor and has extensive experience in developing and implementing policy on nutrition, health, and food safety. She was also an executive with Nabisco, Inc. She previously served on the Mississippi Charter School Authorizer Board after being appointed to that board by then-Lt. Governor Reeves.

Mr. Glen East has served as superintendent of the Gulfport Schools since 2004. He attended Millsaps College and the University of Southern Mississippi. Prior to being appointed superintendent of Gulfport, he served as an administrator in the district. He has also served in the Pass Christian School District.

MRS. ROSEMARY AULTMAN
Appointed by Speaker Philip Gunn in August 2013
At-Large Representative
Term expires July 2022
rosemary.aultman@mdek12.org

DR. ANGELA BASS
Appointed by Governor Tate Reeves in October 2020
Central Supreme Court District Representative
Term expires July 2025
abass@mdek12.org

DR. KAREN ELAM
Appointed by Governor Phil Bryant in January 2015; Reappointed by Governor Tate Reeves in June 2021
Northern Supreme Court District Representative
Term expires July 2030
karen.elam@mdek12.org

MR. BILL JACOBS
Appointed by Lt. Governor Delbert Hosemann in May 2021
At-Large Representative
Term expires July 2024
bjacobs@mdek12.org

DR. WENDI BARRETT
Appointed by Governor Tate Reeves in May 2021
Teacher Representative
Term expires July 2027
wbarrett@mdek12.org

MR. GLEN EAST
Appointed by Governor Tate Reeves in October 2020
Administrator Representative
Term expires July 2023
geast@mdek12.org

William “Bill” Jacobs of Brookhaven previously owned two newspaper publishing companies in southwest Mississippi. He served as the publisher of the Daily Leader in Brookhaven and the Prentiss Headlight in Prentiss until he sold the companies in 2012. He and his wife Amy are active members of Parents for Public Schools and Amy serves on the Mississippi School for the Arts Foundation Board. Jacobs also serves on the Mississippi Economic Council’s Board of Governors and Operating Board.
Dr. McGehee retired as superintendent of the Madison County Schools in 2018. His forty-one-year career includes being a teacher, coach, assistant principal, principal, athletic director and deputy superintendent, and superintendent. He serves as Executive Director of the Mississippi Association of School Administrators and the Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals.

Miller is an attorney and a shareholder in the firm of Copeland, Cook, Taylor & Bush, PA, managing its Hattiesburg office. He handles litigation matters in the areas of healthcare/medical malpractice, employment, transportation, corporate, construction, and education law. He has a B.A. in Accounting from the University of Southern Mississippi and his J.D. from the University of Mississippi School of Law. He and his wife have three children, one who attends Mississippi State University and the other two who are students in the Lamar County School District.

Werner moved to Tupelo from Boston in 1992. She and her husband owned Tupelo Manufacturing Company, Inc. She has served in leadership roles with the Community Development Foundation, which is the economic development organization for Tupelo/Lee County.

Mississippi State Board of Education meetings may be viewed via live steam and past meetings can be viewed from the video archive found on the “MS Board of Education Live Stream” channel on YouTube.

Humphreys, CTE Engineering Instructor at St. Martin High School in the Jackson County School District, was honored in April by the Association for Career & Technical Education (ACTE) as Region IV Teacher of the Year for Mississippi. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, school counselors, guidance and career development professionals, and others at all levels of education. Humphreys joined MPE in 2019.

MPE MEMBERS EARN PAEMST RECOGNITION

The Mississippi Department of Education announced this past May that six Mississippi educators have been named 2021 state-level finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The PAEMST Program is the nation’s highest honor for math and science teachers. One state finalist in each content area may be selected as the Presidential Awarded for the state. The following four MPE members were among Mississippi’s six state-level finalists:

Richard Humphreys, CTE Engineering Instructor at St. Martin High School in the Jackson County School District, was honored in April by the Association for Career & Technical Education (ACTE) as Region IV Teacher of the Year for Mississippi. ACTE represents the community of CTE professionals, including educators, administrators, researchers, school counselors, guidance and career development professionals, and others at all levels of education. Humphreys joined MPE in 2019.

LOWE LEADS DEVELOPMENT OF W-BEST PROGRAM

MPE member Melinda Lowe, director of the Mississippi University for Women’s Office of Outreach & Innovation and the School of Education’s Coordinator of Education, had a key role in the development of the W’s Beginning Educator Support and Training (W-BEST) Program. The new initiative will provide support to new teachers that is strategically aligned to the stages of their development. The W’s School of Education developed the program in response to state-wide conversations about how best to support teachers once they graduate from ed prep programs. Lowe has been a member of MPE since 1994.

MPE MEMBERS EARN ADVANCED DEGREES

By Kelly McFarland

We want to hear from you! If you would like to be recognized by MPE in an upcoming journal or email, send your member spotlight to kelly@mpe.org

MRS. MARY WERNER

Appointed by Speaker Philip Gunn in July 2021
At-Large Representative
Term expires July 2026
mwerner@mdek12.org

Dr. Trisha Gilbreath teaches AP Calculus, Digital Electronics and Principles of Engineering at Northwest Rankin High School in the Rankin County School District.


Tina Walters teaches Chemistry and AP Chemistry at South Jones High School in the Jones County School District.

Ashley Webb teaches Physics, AP Physics 1, AP Physics 2, and PSAT at DeSoto Central High School in DeSoto County Schools.

Congratulations to all!

www.mpe.org
MPE SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANT INFORMATION
FOR 2021-2022
All guidelines and applications will be posted on the MPE website (www.mpe.org).
The following scholarships and grants are available only to MPE members.
See scholarship guidelines for details.

$475 NBCT SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award up to 10 National Board Certification Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in May/June
Due Date: August 6, 2021, by 4:30 p.m.

$1,000 CLASSROOM GRANTS
MPE will award up to 40 Classroom Grants.
Posted on the MPE website late May/June
Due Date: August 27, 2021, by 4:30 p.m.

$1,000 NON-CERTIFIED PERSONNEL SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award up to 20 Non-Certified Personnel Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in July
Due Date: October 1, 2021 by 4:30 p.m.

$570 NBCT MAINTENANCE OF CERTIFICATION SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award up to 10 National Board Certified Teacher Renewal Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in September
Due Date: October 22, 2021, by 4:30 p.m.

STUDENT LOAN PAYMENT CONTEST
MPE will pay one First Year Professional member's student loan payments – up to $3,000 – for one year. The recipient will be chosen via a drawing in October 2021 of Student Members who transitioned to a First Year Professional membership between January 1, 2021, and September 30, 2021.

$500 LINDA ANGLIN TEACHER PREPARATION SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award scholarships to student members who will student teach during the spring of 2022 or during the 2022/2023 academic year. Applications sent to Deans of Education and Directors of Field Experience at colleges & universities.
Due Date: January 21, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.

$1,000 GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award up to 20 Graduate Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in December
Due Date: February 18, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.

$500 HIGH SCHOOL SENIOR SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award up to 20 scholarships to high school seniors whose parent is a member of MPE.
Posted on the MPE website in January
Due Date: March 25, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.

www.mpe.org or call (800)523-0269
Nothing can stop a Mississippi teacher. After the pandemic shut schools down in 2020, you bounced back committed to make the 2020-21 school year as normal as possible for your students. You adapted to virtual teaching, quarantines, a mix of remote and in-person students, and new health and safety protocols including daily temperature checks and keeping students six feet apart.

There is so much more we know about the pandemic after living with it for a year and half. I hope the wisdom and strength you developed teaching through the height of this global health crisis has helped you feel more prepared for the 2021-22 school year. Your resilience is unparalleled.

Along with your resilience, you are entering the new school year with more tools. The Mississippi Connects digital teaching program has equipped every student with a computer device, a learning management system, and access to high-quality instructional materials. The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) will continue to build upon this initiative with digital learning professional development opportunities and coaching support for you. I hope you will take advantage of these opportunities to learn how to use educational technology effectively.

MDE staff have developed new social and emotional learning standards to help you address the social and emotional needs of students to ensure their success in school and in life. We have designed professional development opportunities to help you implement the new standards.

Lawmakers passed a teacher pay raise and funded new instructional coaches, including $5 million for math coaches and $1.5 million for early childhood education coaches. They also allocated $20 million for the teacher supply fund, up from $12 million the previous year.

Your schools and districts are receiving an infusion of federal money through the Elementary and Secondary School Relief (ESSER) fund to accelerate learning, reopen schools safely, and for repair and construction projects to improve air quality in school buildings. There is no doubt the stress and disruption of COVID-19 has affected student performance. You saw this first-hand in your classrooms. Students in every state in the nation have struggled to achieve at their pre-pandemic levels. That is why state and national leaders have devoted so many resources to support student learning and build back stronger.

As we move beyond the most challenging school year of our lives, I am confident Mississippi students will progress just as rapidly as they have over the past seven years. They have new technology to help them learn at school and at home, schools with more funds for support services, and—most importantly—committed teachers who consistently pursue higher academic achievement.

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I am optimistic about the future of education in Mississippi because you have already proven what can happen when there is a singular focus on changing student outcomes. Your work made Mississippi a national leader in improving student achievement from pre-K through grade 12. There is no limit to what Mississippi students can accomplish when they have teachers like you.

Throughout most of 2020 and continuing today, educational institutions, healthcare facilities, government leaders and agencies, businesses and families have been faced with numerous challenges. As some challenges were overcome, other challenges arose. Many of us have longed for a return to “normal,” or to the way we lived in 2019 before the Coronavirus pandemic changed so many aspects of the way we live and learn. The pandemic may have given us the opportunity to explore ways to improve aspects of our universities without sacrificing the components that are beneficial.

The question for us now is how to move forward as we continue to deal with the pandemic. Even as the vaccine has become available and many Mississippians have availed themselves of this opportunity, we see the Delta variant rise, particularly among those who have not been immunized. Schools and universities continue to implement measures necessary to protect the health and safety of students and employees.

As we move forward, we must take the lessons we have learned through this experience and develop long-term strategies to offer the best educational opportunities for our students by blending the essential benefits of in-person learning with the flexibility that technology provides.

For several years, Mississippi public universities have offered many degree programs in an online-only format to enable students who cannot attend classes on campus to pursue their educational goals. During the pandemic, when all courses were moved to an online format, some students missed the classroom interaction with faculty and their fellow students. Our challenge now is to examine our delivery systems and find ways to maximize the effectiveness of all methods to provide opportunities to pursue postsecondary degrees to the greatest number of students in a way that best addresses their needs.

There is no doubt that the pandemic was a profound disruption in all our lives. As educators, the question we must ask and answer now is: What are the lessons we have learned and how will we use those lessons to create more opportunities for our students?

Alfred Rankins Jr., Ph.D. Commissioner of Higher Education

Dr. Carey M. Wright State Superintendent of Education

PANDEMIC PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY TO USE LESSONS LEARNED TO INCREASE BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

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To register, go to www.mpe.org, click on the “MPE Regional Trainings” tab, and then click on the training you wish to attend or scroll down to locate the MPE calendar and click on the training hyperlink.

**ESSENTIAL TOOLS FOR THE VIRTUAL TOOLBOX:** This session will provide participants with web-based tools to create meaningful learning experiences for students in remote situations. Participants in this interactive and engaging virtual workshop will get hands-on experience using the essentials for every teacher’s toolbox. The websites, apps, and Chrome extensions (Flipgrid, Seesaw, Book Creator, etc.) that will be explored are effective learning tools that promote the C’s in traditional, blended, or completely remote learning environments. For optimal workshop experience, participants should use a device bigger than a tablet. All participants must have a device with sufficient internet connection, camera, and audio capabilities.

**LEARNING AND BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH AUTISM AND DYSLEXIA:** Mississippi schools are charged with the responsibility of educating students who require a plethora of unique strategies to address a wide range of learning challenges. Some of the most frustrating and misunderstood of these are dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and dyspraxia. This session will investigate effective teaching strategies for students that present with a complex clinical picture due to a convoluted diagnostic and educational ruling profile. Participants will be guided through a discussion that considers the challenges that a student may experience from the student’s point of view, the teacher’s point of view, and the point of view of the student’s peers.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION:** Rooted in the research of Dr. Carol Tomlinson, this training will provide both the conceptual foundation and practical tools for the professional application of differentiated instruction. Participants will explore several research-based differentiated practices, including continual assessment, flexible grouping, and “teaching up.” Teachers will be provided with examples of instructional strategies and resources that they can immediately adapt in their own classrooms to scaffold learning and promote growth in every student.

**WRITING EFFECTIVE INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATIONAL PLANS:** The 2020-2021 school year required exceptional education teachers to step out of their comfort zones to learn new ways of teaching and learning. The IEP is the beginning point of determining the personalized plan for exceptional students. This high-impact session will center around writing effective IEPs to ensure success for all. Participants will engage in hands-on activities around the eight components of an IEP while utilizing a framework to design a quality IEP with the appropriate accommodations and modifications.

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**NATIONAL BOARD FOR PROFESSIONAL TEACHING STANDARDS®**

MPE’s recruitment incentives provide a great way for you to earn a free membership, as well as a little extra money. You earn a free year’s membership for simply recruiting five new members and you earn money for each new member recruited after five. Encourage your professional co-workers and friends to join the premiere organization for professional educators in Mississippi.

- **Five new members = one year’s free membership**
- **6-9 new members = one year’s membership + $10 per member**
- **10-14 new members = one year’s membership + $15 per member**
- **15+ new members = one year’s membership + $20 per member**

You will receive $5 per student member recruited.

Recruitment bonus checks will be awarded at the end of each quarter, with the first quarter beginning July 1 and ending September 30. Credit will be given for each new member who joins or re-joins** between July 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. Free memberships will be credited towards the next year’s membership.

* $ credit will be given for each additional member after five
** member must have previously been made inactive for a period of three months or more

In Mississippi, National Board Certified Teachers can earn an additional $6,000 - $10,000 per year!

- **Grow professionally**
- **Increase student learning**
- **Add to your income today and into retirement**

Act today! Visit www.NBPTS.org to learn more.

www.mpe.org
MPE Honors Retiring Members

MPE provides a special honorarium for those members who retire after belonging to our association for twenty years or more. We suggest honorariums to the member’s grade/department, PTO, district education foundation (if applicable) or school library, but each member selects the beneficiary of their honorarium. Congratulations to the following members and their beneficiaries we honored during the 2020-2021 school year:

**Susan Anderson** (20 years)
North Jones Elementary, classroom supplies

**Ken Basil** (28 years)
Union County Schools, theatre boosters

**Rhonda Hood** (24 years)
Wayne Academy, music program

**Larry Joblin** (26 years)
Heritage Academy

**Sheila Kolle** (20 years)
Stokes-Beard Elementary, library

**Regina Kuykendall** (24 years)
Pine Grove School, PTO

**Emmy Majure** (27 years)
Neshoba Central Middle School, 6th Grade English Language Arts Department

**Angela Nelson** (21 years)
East Central Lower Elementary, library

**Karen Nichols** (20 years)
Fairview Attendance Center, Language Arts Department

**Kerry Peden** (20 years)
R.H. Bearden Elementary School

**Karen Rushing** (26 years)
Salem Attendance Center, library

**Angela Sims** (22 years)
Laurel Upper Elementary, classroom supplies

**Chris Smith** (27 years)
St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital

**Tess Smith** (28 years)
Lamar County Educational Foundation

**Linda Tackett** (24 years)
South Pontotoc Middle School, Special Education Department

**Gina Yarbrough** (21 years)
George County Middle School, Social Studies Department

Good For Us, Better For You!

Ross & Yerger was recognized as a “Best Practices” Agency by The Independent Insurance Agents & Brokers of America

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**Engaging Speakers**
Legislative and budget news
Great door prizes
CEUs

Registration opens in January for MPE Members!

Saturday, April 9, 2022
The Refuge Conference Center
Flowood, MS

SAVE THE DATE!
Your MPE membership includes...

- Professional liability protection of $2,000,000 with $3,000,000 maximum
- Legal assistance related to employment or professional matters per MPE policy
- $10,000 accidental death & dismemberment coverage
- $2,500 assault related property damage
- Consistent and economical dues-MPE has not increased dues in 13 years
- Identity theft coverage
- Graduate & undergraduate scholarships awarded annually
- NBCT scholarships awarded annually
- Classroom grant opportunities awarded annually
- Non-certified personnel scholarships awarded annually
- Student loan payment contest
- High school senior scholarships
- Free regional trainings offering CEUs to members at no cost
- Unlimited professional advice available 24/7
- Brightview Credit Union membership
- *MPE Journal* published three times per year
- Staff monitors legislation at the state capitol, with weekly updates provided to membership
- Every dollar of your dues stays in Mississippi for your benefit! MPE does not support political candidates.

Optional group discounts...

- Working Advantage discount program
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- SAFECO auto & home insurance
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