MPE CELEBRATES MISSISSIPPI’S 2022 TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

Skye Morgan
Petal High School

Kara Killough
Northwest Rankin Elementary School
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**2022-2023**
Welcome back, Mississippi Professional Educators’ Hive!

The bell has rung, and the new school year has officially begun for school personnel, teachers, students, and parents, so let us ensure that the school’s climate and culture are right to make all stakeholders Crazy in Love with teaching and learning in the 2022-2023 academic year.

We know that research indicates that students who attend schools with positive climates and cultures increase their self-esteem, academic achievement, and attendance while also enhancing the teacher’s Superpower of motivation to support student learning and make them feel like they can Walk on Water.

MPE Hive, Let’s Ring the Alarm this year by making the school’s overall climate positive every day because it helps to set the tone for a conducive learning environment. Your students, parents, and colleagues deserve to feel welcome when they enter the school, especially in your classrooms. Make sure your classrooms are warm, inviting, and inclusive, which promotes safety and clear expectations for all. Remember to give to people what you expect in return.

MPE Hive, Let’s Move On to the three key ingredients that have marinated over time that help to develop your school’s culture: the mission, vision, and beliefs. Your school’s culture plays a pivotal role in the teacher’s perception of student achievement and student’s attitude toward learning. Healthy and positive school cultures are needed to build strong, successful schools.

So, Hive, Back Up for a minute, and ask Me, Myself, and I, how the school’s culture contributes to my personal growth, my lifelong learning as an educator, and students’ social and emotional needs, as well their academic performance. Does the culture embrace new innovative ideas, does it encourage you, does it provide necessary resources to tackle challenges, and does it embrace diversity? Why did I pose those questions? For you to reflect and evaluate your school’s traditions and norms, to identify potential ways to improve your school’s culture and Work It Out!

Educators’ Hive, it is a new school year; let’s strive to make our school’s climate and culture positive by using supportive practices, keeping it positive, addressing individual learner needs, modeling the behavior you want to see, providing constructive feedback, maintaining a safe environment, collaborating with your peers, celebrating success, and encouraging parental involvement.

Educators’ Hive, let us do what we do BEST, provide the necessary cultural conditions so that students can receive the knowledge and skills needed to make all the other professions possible. So, when they leave us, we will have a sense of pride knowing they can Run the World!

*Note: Italicized are songs by Beyonce.
Kelly Riley

“We can’t always choose the music life plays for us, but we can choose how we dance to it.”

While the author of this quote is unknown, I think it is a great reminder for the start of a new school year. A new year with new students, a new position, new school/district, or a new administrator can be challenging, but it also brings new opportunities and adventures for you, your students, and your school family. I hope you will make the most of every situation and choose to dance with joy throughout the year.

As the new school year begins, MPE is hosting a membership drive to encourage more educators to join our association. MPE members’ names will be entered into a drawing for a $250 American Express gift card for each new member they recruit during the months of August and September. In addition to your name being entered into the drawing, you can earn a FREE membership for recruiting five new members between July 1, 2022, and June 30, 2023, and you may earn money for each new member recruited after five. Be sure your recruits provide your name in the “Recruited By” section of our application, whether a paper application or online at www.mpe.org.

As part of the membership drive, we are encouraging our members to share why they are #ProudtobeMPE on social media. Do you appreciate our grants and scholarships? Our regional trainings? Our professional beliefs? Please share why you are proud to be a member of our association on your social media platform(s) using the hashtag #ProudtobeMPE.

The Mississippi State Board of Education is conducting a search for a new State Superintendent of Education following Dr. Carey Wright’s retirement effective June 30. The board plans to review the list of candidates the week of October 31, with top candidates interviewed in early November and the new State Superintendent announced that month. The search timeline calls for the new superintendent to start in the position on January 1, 2023. The board appointed Dr. Kim Benton to serve as Interim State Superintendent during the board’s search. A member of MPE since 1986, Dr. Benton served as MPE’s 1995-96 President. Be sure to read her article on page 18.

The MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 15-17 in Natchez. See page 15 for an overview of their activities and discussions. We appreciate our board members’ continued leadership and service to our association. The board invited Brittany Wagner, author of Next Chance You: Tools, Tips, and Tough Love for Bringing Your A-Game to Life and star of the hit Netflix documentary series, Last Chance U, to be our keynote speaker for our 2023 Best Practices Symposium on Saturday, April 1, 2023. She has accepted, and we are looking forward to a great day of learning, networking, and fun. Be sure to save the date and make plans to join us!

I am frequently asked at the beginning of a new school year if an administrator may reassign an educator to a new or different position. Licensed employees’ contracts acknowledge that “the employee agrees to reassignment during the school term to any area for which a valid license is held.” State law (MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-9-14 (2) (s)) also provides that an educator may only be reassigned to an area in which she/he has a valid license. This same section also provides that a reassigned educator may request his/her local school board to review the reassignment. It has been my experience that most boards uphold a reassignment unless the educator has been reassigned to an area for which they do not hold a valid license.

Thank you for the incredible impact you have on your students’ lives every day. Best wishes to you and your students for a wonderful 2022-23 school year! Enjoy the dance!
Back to School

Do these three words evoke laughter? Excitement? Fear? Anxiety? A hard reminder to call your doctor to refill medication?

No matter the feeling, the time is here. No more lazy days of summer spent at the pool. No more drinking coffee before it gets cold. No more leisurely eating lunch with friends. No more bathroom freedom! Most teachers have spent the month of July planning, thinking, and creating the perfect year. Admit it, you have probably looked on Pinterest at trends and ideas for decorating and organizing the classroom. Even I have done it many times. I have tried and I have failed, miserably.

However, I would like to share my practical, tried and true advice for a new school year.

Positivity – This is something YOU can control. I refuse to let others fill me with negativity. I have the ability to choose who I allow into my head and to possibly steal my sunshine!

Friendship – I am the first to tell anyone that I could not survive a school year without my teacher “tribe”. Whether a tribe of 5 or a teacher bestie, find that person or group to laugh with, cry with, complain with, and vent to. These individuals are my daily lifeline to survival in the crazy world of education.

Laughter – Face it, laughter is so much better than tears on any day. Some days I must really look to find laughter. Many days I laugh at myself while other days it comes from venting to my teacher tribe on how bad the day has been which leads to laughter. Laugh. Do not cry. You will feel better, I promise!

Knowledge – If I had to teach Calculus, I would be in trouble; yet I know I can at least ask where the books are located. I embrace that my building is filled with others who have different knowledge. Ask. Observe. Question. Be willing to ask as well as to try something that might be outside your comfort zone to get the desired effect. After all, we are all teachers, why not learn from each other?

Why – Each year, I take the time to write down the “why” I teach. This list is not made of “because I am good with numbers,” this list has statements like, “to be the one bright spot for that one kid each day.” I am often more than just a teacher to a kid. It could be that I am an informer, a comedian, an enforcer, a listener, or simply a kind face. But as the year goes on and times get tough, I often dig out the list and read my whys.

Education is emerging from under the terror of COVID. Many communities, and especially parents, have learned the value of a great teacher. People have witnessed the dedication and magic teachers possess. I challenge each of you to continue to find your magic and shine brighter than ever this school year!
MPE HONORS RETIRING MEMBERS

MPE provides a special honorarium for those members who retire after belonging to our association for 20 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 2021-2022 school year:

LAURA BYRD (21 YEARS)
Grenada Middle School’s library

BETH CHANDLER (22 years)
Nanih Waiya Attendance Center, classroom supplies

MARY JO COUSAR (30 years)
Ripley High School’s Art Department

LYNN CULLIVER (23 years)
East Marion Elementary

JUSTIN EVANS (21 years)
George County High School, Science Department

STEWART HURLEY (27 years)
Ronald McDonald House

DRS. CINDY & TIM MARTIN (22 years)
Clinton Park Elementary’s library

KATIE MERCER (28 years)
Petal Middle School’s PTO

MELISSA MORGAN (21 years)
Bruce Elementary’s Third Grade Department

AMY OWENS (32 years)
D’Iberville Elementary

DAVID OWENS (32 years)
Vancleave High School’s Athletic Department

SUZIE WARD (24 years)
Lamar County Educational Foundation

JANICE SMITH (22 years)
Wesson Attendance Center’s Teacher Academy

KATIE WARREN (26 years)
West Hancock Elementary’s library

LARRY & PATSY WATSON (21 years)
Eupora High School, classroom supplies

SAVE YOUR RECEIPTS!

MPE will reimburse you up to $50 for food and beverages for recruitment related meetings. Simply submit your itemized receipt to our office for reimbursement.
SMITH HONORED AS STAR TEACHER

CAROL SMITH was honored by the Mississippi Economic Council and the M.B. Swayze Foundation as the 2022 STAR Teacher for Northeast Jones High School. We failed to recognize her in the Spring 2022 MPE Journal due to her being listed under a different name in our database.

MEMBERS RECEIVE HONORS

Petal High School history teacher GREG HOWARD won the 2022 James Madison Foundation Fellowship for Mississippi. The honor is the most prestigious award in constitutional history and government for secondary teachers. He attended classes on constitutional history through Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., this summer and will begin a second master’s degree paid for by the Foundation this fall.

KRISTI JERNIGAN of the Winston-Louisville Career and Technology Center in the Louisville Municipal School District received Mississippi’s Aspirations in Computing (AIC) 2022 Educator Award from the University of Southern Mississippi’s School of Computing Sciences and Computer Engineering and the National Center for Women and Information. Jernigan was honored for encouraging students to explore their interest in computing and cybersecurity.

DR. EBONEE MAGEE-DORSEY, counselor at Monticello Elementary and Rod Paige Middle School in the Lawrence County School District, has been named School Counselor of the Year (SCOY) by the Magnolia State School Counselor Association. The SCOY Program honors the professionals who devote their careers to serving as advocates for all students, helping them achieve success in school and in life.

MPE MEMBERS HONORED AS PAEMST FINALISTS

MDE announced in May that five K-6 Mississippi educators had been named 2022 state-level finalists for the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). The PAEMST Program is our nation’s highest honor for teachers of math and science, including computer science. Two Mississippi teachers will be selected for the 2021-22 award cycle and will receive a $10,000 award, recognition at a White House ceremony, and the opportunity to provide input on policies to improve science, technology, engineering, mathematics, and computer science education. Congratulations to the following three MPE members who are among the five state finalists:

JANA CHAO, a fifth-grade computer science teacher at Eastside Elementary in the Clinton Public School District

LESHAE COLLUMS, a third-grade math teacher at D.T. Cox Elementary in the Pontotoc City School District

JENNIFER HITE, a fifth-grade math and science teacher at Pearl Upper Elementary in the Pearl Public School District

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
Is your MPE membership profile UP-TO-DATE?

Mississippi Professional Educators

We educators are dedicated to maintaining the science and the art of teaching with constant awareness of educational research, trends, and best practices that will enable us to support and encourage our colleagues. We do this to provide Mississippi students a quality education in a safe and respectful environment.

Please let us know! Go to “Member Login” at www.mpe.org and update your member profile!

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*

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.

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, 2022, and June 30, 2023. 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
MPE invites its members to apply for classroom grant funding each year to try out a new idea or buy the “extras” for an already great lesson plan or project. Forty-four members received grants of up to $1,000 for their class projects and instructional program. We are pleased to spotlight several of the grants below for your enjoyment, as well as your reference for ideas for your own classroom.

### Carly Parker
**Harper McCaughan Elementary**
**Workshop Wonders**

Thank you for funding the Workshop Project: CSI: Time Travelers, Fairy Tales on Trial, Survivors: Team Trials, and Chocolate, Chocolate, and More Chocolate. Offering students a chance to choose their own unit of study increased student learning, intrinsic motivation, and allowed them to work on state objectives and 21st century skills. My cohorts and I were excited to offer 4 intense units of study that would actively engage all students. Some students became detectives hunting for a killer, others battled to the end to see who would be the Team Trial Champion, while some dedicated themselves to saving the life of the Big Bad Wolf, who may or may not be that bad, and lastly, some students' sweet tooth got even larger as they immersed themselves in the world of chocolate. The students thought these activities were a lot of fun and not much work; however, they were challenging and interesting while also meeting state objectives. Once again, thank you, MPE.

### Tracy Bowman
**Petal Elementary School**
**Recorder Karate**

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that provided 350 individual Recorder Instruments for my 4th grade students. Through this grant, I was able to purchase multiple materials for my music classroom to teach science and music competencies and benchmarks of learning. My first goal for the students was to investigate and draw conclusions, through integration of science and music, about the relationship between the rate of vibrating objects and the pitch of the sound while learning to play the recorder instrument. Through this integrated unit of study, students were not only able to learn their science benchmark through the elements of their textbook knowledge in the regular classroom setting, but were also able to explore hands-on learning of the elements of sound through the recorder instrument in the music classroom. My second goal was to have the students learn certain playing skills, notes, fingering, songs, and rhythm through music with the performance of an ensemble concert at the end of the unit.

### Donna Wilson
**Diocese of Biloxi**
**Learning in 3D during Covid**

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that was provided in my classroom. We were blessed to have enough specimens and materials that provided this instruction necessary for the units and hands-on projects. Teaching through dissection is next level experience.
Misty Robinson  
Fairview Attendance Center  
**Science and Organization in Action**

Thank you so much, MPE, for funding the grant for my project. With this funding, I was able to purchase 30 buddy pocket charts, Scholastic Leveled Readers, Be Amazing! Weather Station, Insect Lore- Butterfly Growing Kit, Wild Weather Vocabulary Readers Set, Animal Groups Vocabulary Readers Set, 180 Days of Science, DK Learn and Explore Science, and Scholastic News plus Science Spin. My goal for this project was to always have science materials ready and easily accessible. Another goal for this project was for our students to be able to have informational text that they could read during individual reading time that would improve their reading skills and help them develop a love for reading. My students were so excited about our project being funded, and they always loved being able to use these wonderful Science materials throughout the day.

Sharon Kelly  
Pearl River Central Middle School  
**Making Math Shine**

Thank you to MPE for funding the classroom grant that provided the supplies for our “Making Math Glow” Glow Day a huge success. My main goal was to create engaging, interactive math lessons for all of our students to enjoy. The activities and skill games made it possible for students to review an entire nine weeks of standards in one day. All of my classes are inclusion classes that include many students that lack the confidence to demonstrate success. My second goal was to provide the opportunity for all of my students to feel their own level of success so that they would have that confidence leading into their term one Common Assessment. Through this grant I was able to purchase all of the supplies necessary to provide a fun, engaging learning experience for all of my students that has been talked about weekly ever since.

Melissa Harrison  
McLaurin High School  
**Tigers SAS/Tigers Serious about Science**

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that provided dissecting specimens to represent the invertebrate phyla taught in my Zoology class. In addition, I was able to purchase plant slides and plant growing kits to engage the students in agribusiness activities for my Botany class. My first goal was to update our lab supplies to get our science students back into the lab for hands-on activities. I wanted school to be as normal as possible for them after the last year and a half of Covid restrictions. Secondly, I wanted my students to put what they learned in the classroom in motion with their lab activities. It is very satisfying to watch my students make investigative discoveries and discuss their findings with their peers.

Cecil Murphy  
St. Martin Middle School  
**STEAM Taking Off**

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 supplies to build gliders and solar cars got more students involved and helped create more bonds between the students. The students had a great time also. Through the grant, I was able to purchase enough supplies for many students to build and get involved in hands-on learning, and friendships developed as a result.
MPE MEMBERS HONORED AS MISSISSIPPI’S 2022 TEACHER AND ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR

The Mississippi Department of Education announced Mississippi’s 2002 Teacher and Administrator of the Year during a celebration in Jackson on April 1. Skye Morgan, a history teacher at Petal High School in the Petal School District, is the 2022 Mississippi Teacher of the Year. Kara Killough, principal of Northwest Rankin Elementary in the Rankin County School District, is the 2022 Mississippi Administrator of the Year. They have both been members of MPE for a number of years.

Skye and Kara followed different paths into education. Skye describes herself as being a very challenging high school student who had a hard time focusing and feeling like she fit in. Interested in theater production, she pursued a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the University of Southern Mississippi (USM) with plans to ultimately design sets on Broadway. Her career path was altered when her high school speech/debate coach and theater teacher asked her to serve as a long-term substitute. While Skye loved her time in the classroom, she decided to pursue her production dreams only to realize production didn’t fulfill her as the classroom did. After pursuing an alternate route to licensure and a Masters of the Arts in Teaching from USM, she taught at Richton High School and North Forrest High School before joining the Petal High School family in 2015.

Crediting her sixth-grade teacher, Mrs. Pam Johnson, as her inspiration for becoming an educator, Kara followed a more traditional route into education. She had just moved to Mississippi and remembers that Mrs. Johnson connected with her, living out social and emotional support in the classroom each day long before today’s SEL standards and lessons were created. Kara wanted to be a teacher to make an impact on the lives of students just like Mrs. Johnson did on her life. Having earned both her Bachelor of Science in Education and her Masters in Educational Leadership from Mississippi College, Kara has worked in the Rankin County School District her entire educational career. She pursued administration after she was encouraged to do so by one of her administrators and realized administration would combine her love of education with leadership.

When considering the highlights of their careers in education, Skye and Kara both recall the successes that make all of the hard work worth it. Skye reflects that there has not been one defining moment in her career; rather, it is small daily successes. As she shared, “Teaching is hard as all educators know, so small daily successes is what I try to focus on. Not to say that every day is fully successful, there are many failures, or roadblocks/obstacles, but small successes remind me what I do daily. It keeps me focused and grounded.”

Kara cites the proudest moment of her career as leading her school from Academic Watch to an A performing school. She cites the team approach of faculty and staff, with teachers rallying together to accomplish this goal. As Kara shared, “Everyone came to the
table with a growth mindset and a team spirit.” After earning an A classification, Kara remembers walking to each of her faculty members, looking them in the eye, and giving them a sincere “Thank you!” As she shared, “Words could not express how proud of our school I was on that day, and still am! Having been at the same school for 18 years, it is a joy and privilege to reflect on the growth that has come about because of the hard work and dedication of our staff, students, and families.”

Reflecting on the numerous challenges faced by educators today, Skye and Kara both shared that their passion and joy for education and their students keep them going. Citing her passion for creating environments that are safe and organized spaces for rich civil discourse so students can learn the skills necessary to participate in our democratic-republic, Skye shared, “When you make passion the center of everything you do, it doesn’t seem like ‘work’ anymore; instead, you are just following your passion.” Kara reflected, “There simply isn’t anything else I would rather do. As hard as it is on a lot of days, it is more rewarding on so many days. This reward and joy far outweigh the difficult times we often face.”

When asked what advice she would give a novice teacher, Skye shared, “Don’t get discouraged by failures, as they will eventually turn into successes. While it is challenging, it is the MOST rewarding thing you can do with your life! You are trusted to teach children, our next generation! Don’t be afraid to stop a lesson that isn’t working and tell your students sorry. You don’t have to be perfect, and the kids will appreciate it when you show those imperfections and own up to them. Amidst your most challenging days you will be a bright spot in a child’s day. Try and focus on small successes and don’t get caught up in the small failures as your day will be filled with both. Find a strong and positive teacher support group. Don’t surround yourself with those who engage in negative talk...Saying that there will be challenging days, I want to also tell you there will be AMAZING days, ones that you can’t stop talking about! It’s like any profession really, good days and bad, but we GET TO IMPACT KIDS and they are the best thing about this world!”

Likewise, Kara encourages novice administrators to find a support group of fellow administrators. She shared, “Educators are champions for their students, but they also need champions themselves for encouragement and motivation, so they can continue to share their passion of learning. One component of leading that has helped me grow the most during my time as an administrator has been to stay connected with a core group of other administrators who I can call during my best of times or my hardest days. These colleagues are my champions and I, hopefully, am theirs as well. I once read, ‘A mentor is not someone who walks ahead of you to show you how they did it. A mentor walks alongside you to show you how you did it. A mentor walks alongside you to show you...”

Dr. Carey Wright, Mississippi’s former State Superintendent of Education, congratulates Skye Morgan.
what you can do.’ Even though I serve as an administrator in one of the largest districts in the state of MS, there are still only twenty-six other individuals in my district that walk the same road I walk each day as lead school administrator. Not everyone can relate to the pressures and stressors that leading a school can bring. Having a small group of other lead principals that I can call at the drop of a hat has allowed me to learn from different perspectives and get advice based on their experiences. These champions have been a lifeline not only to my professional growth but also to keeping the stressors of the job from entering my homelife.

Mississippi’s Administrator of the Year and Teacher of the Year will both share expertise through various presentations and activities. Skye and Kara are looking forward to their work in their respective positions and meeting fellow educators throughout the state. They both emphasize the critical importance of educators learning from each other. Stating that she is “excited to share what I learn throughout the process in hopes to inspire and support others in the field,” Skye is ready to listen and learn from others while learning about other educators’ passions. Citing the importance of learning with and through others, Kara shared, “True collaboration is a win/win, and I am excited to share in that collaboration with many others across our state!”

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MPE MEMBERS EARN DOCTORATES

CANDIES COOK graduated in May from the University of Mississippi with a Ph.D. in Elementary Education. A member of MPE since 2004, she serves as the elementary instructional math coach for the Oxford School District.

HARRISON MICHAEL graduated in April from Jackson State University with a Ph.D. in Education Administration. A member of MPE since 2005, he serves as principal of Woolfolk Middle School and Alternative Education Director for the Mississippi Achievement School District.
MPE BOARD HOLDS ANNUAL PLANNING RETREAT

The MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 15-17 in Natchez. The board hosted a reception Wednesday evening for local educators and officials. Board members particularly enjoyed discussing current educational issues with those legislators in attendance. Upon learning during the reception that several board members would be touring the city Thursday afternoon, Mayor Dan Gibson had a cameraman film those members on their tour for potential use in a commercial for the city.

During Thursday’s planning meeting, board members met with the Deans of Education from local universities to discuss their strategies for recruiting and retaining teacher preparation students. Dr. Malinda Butler of Alcorn State University, Dr. Noal Cochran of the University of Southern Mississippi, and Dr. Teresa Poole of William Carey University shared their universities’ recruitment strategies, resources, and services for teacher prep students. MPE is proud to host a student chapter on each of these campuses.

In addition to reviewing our association’s 2021-22 benefits and services during its Thursday morning planning meeting, the board discussed our 2022-23 regional trainings and made plans for our April 1, 2023, Best Practices Symposium. Brittany Wagner, author of Next Chance You: Tools, Tips, and Tough Love for Bringing Your A-Game to Life and star of the hit Netflix documentary series, Last Chance U, will be our keynote speaker. The board held its quarterly meeting that Friday.

MPE appreciates our directors’ continued leadership and commitment to our association and its members.
MPE SCHOLARSHIPS AND GRANT INFORMATION FOR 2022-2023

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 5, 2022, 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: September 5, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.

$1,000 Administrator School Grants
MPE will award up to 40 Administrator School Grants.
Posted on the MPE website late June/July
Due Date: September 21, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.

$1,000 Non-Certified Personnel Scholarships
MPE will award up to 10 Non-Certified Personnel Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in July
Due Date: October 7, 2022, 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 21, 2022, by 4:30 p.m.

$500 Linda Anglin Teacher Preparation Scholarships
MPE will award scholarships to student members who will student teach during the spring of 2023 or during the 2023-2024 academic year. Applications sent to Deans of Education and Directors of Field Experience at colleges & universities.
Due Date: January 20, 2023, 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 17, 2023, by 4:30 p.m.

$500 High School Senior Scholarships
MPE will award up to 20 High School Graduate Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in February
Due Date: March 24, 2023, by 4:30 p.m.
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- Teaching & Learning Globally

ADD-ON ENDORSEMENTS
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Hello, Fellow Educators!

I am so fortunate to start this school year with you as Mississippi’s new State Superintendent of Education, Interim. My career has been devoted to public education in the state for more than 40 years. I have been a member of Mississippi Professionals Educators (MPE) since 1985 and served as MPE president in 1995. I consider it a privilege to officially contribute once again to the values, beliefs and goals of MPE as we keep the positive outcomes of students top of mind.

As a former teacher and principal, I remember all too well the excitement felt at the beginning of a school year. Fresh classroom supplies, high-polished floors, and new faces to meet and greet all signaled the enthusiasm of back-to-school. There is always so much optimism and hope in the air. On the state level at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), I have those same positive feelings.

The start of the 2022-23 school year is in stark contrast to the previous two years in response to COVID-19. Making adjustments for the health and safety of students and staff will always be of utmost importance, but with each passing day, we appear to move closer to the pre-pandemic sense of normalcy. One thing we all – educators and students - learned during the pandemic was to embrace digital learning. This year the MDE is providing $23 million in new digital subscriptions to districts for online learning resources in English Language Arts, mathematics, science, and social studies for K-12 students. With continued utilization, these digital learning resources will supplement what you are already teaching in the classroom.

As educators, you know how vital it is for our state’s youngest students to receive quality instruction as early as possible. MDE is thrilled the Early Learning Collaboratives (ELC) initiative serving 4-year-old pre-K students is expanding by seven sites. This brings the total to 30 sites statewide and marks more than 21,000 students served since 2014-2015. The ELC initiative helps our youngest students meet, maintain or exceed literacy standards, and MDE will continue the push to emphasize literacy with additional support for grades 4-6. For secondary students MDE is expanding opportunities for advanced coursework and workforce development programs. I am also happy to report that at least 112 special education students in 40 school districts earned an alternate diploma, positioning them to matriculate into programs at their local community colleges.

While excellent student resources are necessary, you as educators need to be healthy and equipped to use the resources in order for students to succeed. Your well-being is vital both personally and professionally. That’s why the MDE continues to provide a range of meaningful professional development (PD) opportunities for educators at no cost. Visit MDE’s Office of Professional Development webpage at mdek12.org/OPD/RPD to see available opportunities.

Another factor impacting educators this new school year is increased compensation. Mississippi’s legislators delivered significant legislation in the 2022 session to increase teachers’ average pay by $5,100, marking the largest pay increase for teachers in state history.

As you can see, we have many reasons to be optimistic as we start the 2022-2023 school year.

I look forward to working with you to build upon the accomplishments achieved in Mississippi’s public education system over the past several years. Thank you for your continued commitment to helping Mississippi students succeed. Let’s make it a great year!

Dr. Kim Benton
State Superintendent
of Education, Interim
The beginning of a new school year brings about excitement of starting new tasks. As elementary school children make their way into school buildings for the first time, or college freshmen enter the halls of community colleges or universities, there is undoubtedly excitement and anticipation for new things to come.

Many of you are familiar with the Education Achievement Council (EAC) that was established in 2010 by the Mississippi Legislature. The purpose of the EAC is to maintain “attention to the state’s goal of increasing the educational attainment and skill levels of the state’s working-age population to the national average by 2025…”

Back in October 2020, the EAC adopted the state’s first educational attainment goal called “Ascent to 55%.” The goals of this initiative are to increase the number of adults with credentials of value, to get adults with credentials of value to stay in Mississippi, to attract adults with credentials of value to move to Mississippi, to close ethnic and gender gaps, and to create a culture that values credentials of value.

Information provided by the Mississippi Economic Council (MEC) Tour 2020, shows 87% of Mississippi employers believe their current workforce will need additional training, credentials, certifications, or degrees in the next 10-20 years. What exactly are these credentials and certificates defined as? MEC defines college as “any education beyond high school that leads to financial stability. It can be a four-year degree or beyond, but it can also be a two-year community college degree or a certificate in career and technical education.”

Mississippi’s community colleges provide a wonderful option for earning certificates, credentials, and degrees in many sought after career paths. Practical nursing, information technology, manufacturing, and STEM are a few examples of those pathways that will require many positions to be filled now and in the future. Not only do the community colleges provide this training, we do so at a lower cost and in a shorter time frame than a traditional college path. Only 17.4% of working age Mississippi citizens have earned some college credits, but have not completed a degree or credential. Did you know that 44.4% of Mississippians ages 26-64 have a credential of value, compared to 51.9% nationally? This information comes from the Lumina Foundation.

In order for Mississippi to make progress towards this attainment goal, it will take all educational entities and or various partners working together. This means showing our students the value of earning a credential or certificate. As professional educators, you know that not every student learns the same way and having many options for our students to be successful can be quite exciting and rewarding, not to mention how it contributes to the welfare of our own state.

I wish you all the best for this new school year, and thanks for what you do for our students.
The college years are often remembered fondly and sometimes referred to as “the best years of my life” by some graduates. While this is true for many alumni, the college years can also be quite stressful for some students. Deadlines, worry about grades, peer pressure, economic stress, substance abuse, and relationship issues can contribute to tension and anxiety.

Last year, Dr. Nick McAfee led a team of researchers at the University of Mississippi Medical Center to conduct a needs assessment study across the Mississippi’s public university system. Funded through a grant, the study looked at what mental health concerns students had, the utilization of mental health services on and off campus, and how mental health concerns impacted enrollment intentions. The researchers found that there is a substantial need for mental health services and that there were times when the need outpaced the availability of services on campus. The researchers also found that students were comfortable accessing these services using a telehealth option.

The survey also revealed that mental health issues sometimes have a negative impact on enrollment decisions, preventing students from completing their degrees that will enable them to pursue their career and life aspirations. As educators, we must help provide the services needed to ensure that mental health needs are addressed before they become life-altering for our students.

Based on the findings of the survey, the Board of Trustees has approved a legislative request to help address these issues. We are asking for an appropriation specifically to address mental health needs on campus. If provided by the Legislature, part of the funding will be used to expand the services available, particularly services available through the telehealth option, and part of the funding will be used to market the services available, so that more members of the campus community will know about the services available and how to access them.

It is important to remember that, while education is a very rewarding profession, it can also be quite stressful. It is essential that, as educators, we take care of our own mental health just as we would encourage our students to do for themselves. I encourage you to take advantage of any services that are available on campus and refer any students that may exhibit signs of needing mental health assistance to the services available to them.

You never know when providing the right information at the right time may make a world of difference to a student and even change the trajectory of his or her life.
300 MISSISSIPPI EDUCATORS BEGIN NATIONAL BOARD CERTIFICATION JOURNEY TOGETHER

On June 7-8, 2022, three hundred (300) Mississippi educators from across forty-eight (48) counties in the state gathered and were commended on being selected to begin their journey of becoming Nationally Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs).

As members of the Technology Integration for Mississippi Educators (TIME) Cohort, they were selected from more than 990 applicants and began the process with two (2) days of professional development.

As members of the TIME Cohort, the group will receive scholarships to cover their National Board Certification costs, iPad devices, and teacher training sessions provided by Apple. Members of the cohort will also receive access to the ATLAS video case library and ongoing professional development from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS).

The TIME Cohort is funded by Governor Reeves’ Emergency Education Grant, and members are under the direct guidance NBPTS staff.

More than 85% of the participating teachers in the cohort are employed in high-need school districts, meaning their state report card grades are D or F. National Board Certification is widely known as the gold standard in teaching certification and research demonstrates that National Board Certified teachers positively impact student learning and academic development within their classrooms and districts.

Research also supports that students of Board Certified teachers, on average, learn more than their peers who do not have Board Certified teachers as instructors. Those higher standards for teachers involved in the certification process translate into more targeted and strategic learning for students within those high-need districts.
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. You must complete the full day of training to be awarded .6 CEUs.
Plan to join practitioners from throughout the state for MPE’s 2022 Best Practices Symposium featuring Brittany Wagner. A nationally respected athletic academic counselor and motivational speaker, Brittany is best known for her role as the breakout star of the hit Netflix documentary series, Last Chance U. Recognized for her compassion, encouragement, and no-nonsense attitude, she guided many young men to academic and professional success despite run-ins with the law, extreme poverty, abandonment, and often a complete lack of academic preparedness. Brittany’s first book: Next Chance You: Tools, Tips and Tough Love for Bringing Your A-Game to Life was published in September of 2021. You don’t want to miss her!

The day’s agenda and additional details will be announced in December. Priority registration will open for MPE members in February. Registration will open for non-members in March if space allows. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us on April 1!

Engaging Speakers     Legislative and budget news     Great door prizes     CEUs

Registration opens in February for MPE Members!

Saturday, April 1, 2023
The Refuge Conference Center
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