Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Teachers' Rights

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MPE Regional Training
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Happy New Year!

Let me be the first to wish you a Happy New Year for the 2018-2019 school term. I hope you have a year that is filled with many “aha” moments, laughter, discovery, and learning experiences filled with wonderful memories. Remember to begin each day with a smile and a clean slate, “Teach Like a Pirate” – increase student engagement, boost your creativity, and transform your life as an educator (Dave Burgess – a great read).

Your students’ minds are yours to grow. Remind them daily that they are special and as their teacher you will push them to work to their potential. All children can learn. It is our responsibility as teachers to find the way that they learn best. Sometimes we have to sing and dance, but we as teachers do whatever it takes to help our students “grow those brains.” Make your classroom an inviting place to spend the day; colorful and print-rich anchor charts will capture their attention.

Never be afraid to ask for help. Always be willing to learn from others and to share what works for you. Be compassionate, as you never know what a student has been through before they get to you. They need to know you care. Their education should be your passion. Remember, respect is earned and treat others like you want to be treated. We are with our students 8 to 9 hours a day, 5 days a week. Instill in them values, work ethic, and life skills that will enable them to have a productive and successful school year that will carry over year after year. Teachers are VIPs. Strive to be the one that will always be fondly remembered. We as teachers have the power to make every day better than the day before. Build on each day and at the end of the year sit back and look at what has been accomplished. Talk about your successes, highlight them, make them memorable! I keep a journal and write about those funny stories and “aha” moments, the moments that took my breath, as well as the times I cried, and just any ordinary day. Remind yourself daily why you love teaching. It takes a special person to be a teacher. YOU are SPECIAL!

This year when you see another teacher doing something that really catches your eye and will be trying it yourself, “shout them out!” Write them a note to let them know, “Hey I saw you doing something great and I am going to try it too!” You will make their day!

This year, mentor a new teacher. When mentoring, be honest, be invested, and lead by example to be successful. Communication skills are a necessity and providing constructive feedback is a key factor, all the while forming a relationship with the mentee. Mentoring benefits the mentor, mentee, and the classroom. The mentor strengthens his/her listening skills, enhances relationship building skills, and provides an added sense of purpose for one’s career. The mentee develops a skill for competency, improves confidence and communication skills, while expanding the mentee’s network of contacts. The school/district fosters employee retention, improves talent acquisition efforts, and harnesses the power of natural leadership. Mentoring gives you the opportunity to encourage your mentee to join MPE. When recruiting make sure you bring to their attention our scholarships and classroom grants that are available after being a member for one year.

Have a great year!
I am a Bruce Springsteen fan. I’ve seen him in concert, read his biography, and he is frequently on my radio. Driving into work recently, one of my favorite songs, “Land of Hope and Dreams,” came on. I realized how applicable the lyrics are for the beginning of a new school year:

I will provide for you and I’ll stand by your side
You’ll need a good companion now for this part of the ride
Yeah, leave behind your sorrows, let this day be the last
Well, tomorrow there’ll be sunshine and all this darkness past

The song continues….

I said, this train, dreams will not be thwarted
This train, faith will be rewarded
This train, hear the steel wheels singing
This train, bells of freedom ringing

As the conductor of your classes’ train this year, where will you take your students? Are you encouraging their dreams and motivating them through each leg of the ride? Will you be “a good companion” upholding them in their disappointments and celebrating their successes? We all know that hard work (i.e., “faith”) and education open doors (i.e., “bells of freedom”) for students. As I’ve shared before, every child deserves an adult who doesn’t give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best they possibly can be.

This issue of our MPE Journal is full of valuable information for this new school year. You will find an overview of educators’ rights in various situations in our focus article on pages 12 and 13. We provide a list of our 2018-2019 regional trainings on page 16. Our “Member Spotlight” on pages 8 and 21 celebrates the accomplishments of several of our members throughout the state. Be sure to see our “Save the Date” reminder for our March 30, 2019, Best Practices Symposium featuring Gerry Brooks and Marshall Ramsey.

We are preparing to launch our new website and association management system in October. If you receive an email from me or receive correspondence in the mail regarding the need for you to take some action related to this launch, please do so at your earliest convenience. We are very excited about the opportunities these new resources will provide for our members.

Are you receiving my weekly emails each Friday morning? They are a great way for you to stay informed as to the latest MPE news/scholarships/grants, education and legislative updates, and other opportunities. If you are not receiving my emails, please contact our office (800-523-0269) or email me (kelly@mpe.org) to make sure we have your current email address on file. I will email our members a link to our annual membership survey the beginning of October. We want to hear from you, so please make sure we have your current email address on file!

MDE’s Student Testing Task Force met in June and August. A subcommittee of the task force met in July to work on surveys that will be sent to local districts. The task force is scheduled to meet again on October 16. Additional information, including links to live-streams of task force meetings, as well as links to recorded live-stream video of meetings, is available at https://www.mdek12.org/SSE/mississippi-student-testing-task-force.

Best wishes to you and your students for an incredible 2018-19 school year in which your dreams are not thwarted and your faith is rewarded!
While interviewing prospective teacher assistants, one bold, middle-aged applicant asked me, “What keeps you coming back?” She wanted to know what made education appealing to keep returning. I have not changed my answer since I offered it in 1987 as I was a young, new teacher seeking employment in schools far away from my home. “I want to change the world.”

Diving deep into my emotions and my rationale, I began to really ponder what DOES keep me coming back? True, I do want to change the world, but that could be accomplished in other ways. I love to meet people and learn their stories. The friendships I have made will continue for a lifetime, but why do I return?

That first year was a challenge. Teaching Siobhan in kindergarten, a child who had never experienced any interaction with children her own age, but could read my lesson plans in cursive was a trying time that grew my first year expertise tenfold. Remembering the toothy grin of Donnell, who proudly exclaimed that because of his ethnicity, he couldn’t get head lice so I didn’t need to waste my time checking his head, always brings a smile. The memory of Patrick, who came from so little, but could create the latest design of Jordans from notebook paper, or a motorcycle from the aluminum foil that wrapped the potato at lunch, tugs at my heart because I don’t know what happened to him. Fran, Bob, and Whit, attorneys, along with Emily, the pharmacist, Alex and Andrew, an accountant and entrepreneur, who went to Africa to teach before he settled in with his real career, make me see that there is hope that I am helping to change the world. Missy, Kristin, Whitney, Jordan, Lacey, Shelby, Kayleigh, and Blake are continuing in my footsteps and teaching students in Mississippi, and we all know we need great teachers!

Shemeka taught me that building bridges in science was not as easy when you didn’t have parental help at home. David taught me that a persistent parent can truly make a difference, even when I thought having him write his spelling words thirty times each was a bit excessive. Drew taught me that when Plan A is all you have, you must have determination to obtain Plan A, especially when the first attempt fails. Amber taught me that I must offer more kindness to more people since life is a vapor. Brittany reached out to me many years after third grade to thank me for giving her a voice and shared how my words of concern built courage to allow her to face her accuser and become a voice for others.

Why do I keep coming back? Truly, I don’t love high stakes testing. I am not a fan of intervention paperwork, nor do I enjoy always fighting the perception of educators by those who seek to harm, but I do love children. I love Mississippi children, and for this, I return.

Lisa Williamson, MPE Board of Directors
The MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 13-15 at The Grammy Museum Mississippi in Cleveland. The board hosted a reception Wednesday evening for local MPE building reps, past board members, higher education officials, superintendents, and legislators. During Thursday’s planning meeting, the board reviewed our 2017-18 benefits and services and planned for the upcoming 2018-19 school year, including:

- Evaluating our membership recruitment and retention throughout the state. More than 2,300 educators joined MPE last year! We gained 100+ new members in six counties: Forrest, Harrison, Lauderdale, Oktibbeha, Rankin, and Scott. Our membership exceeds 300 in 12 counties: Forrest, Harrison, Hinds, Jackson, Jones, Lamar, Lauderdale, Lee, Lowndes, Oktibbeha, Pearl River, and Rankin.
- Analyzing evaluations from the nineteen regional trainings we hosted in 2017-2018, as well as the forty-four classroom grants that we funded throughout the state.
- Reviewing the legal assistance and representation we provided to twenty-two members.

The Grammy Museum Mississippi offers exciting resources for educators and students throughout Mississippi, including workshops and lesson plans created around state standards. Museum staff took the board on a guided tour and highlighted the educational resources available. For additional information, please visit www.grammymuseumms.org.

The board held its quarterly meeting that Friday. MPE appreciates our directors’ continued commitment to our association and our members, as they volunteer their time and service.
Is your MPE membership profile UP-TO-DATE?

Have you switched schools? Do you have a new home address, cell phone number, or email address? Please let us know! *Go to "Member Login" at www.mpe.org and update your profile today!

*Use your member ID located on the back of this journal. If you are logging in for the first time, your password will be your last name.

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

MCKINNON HONORED WITH PAEMST AWARD

Angela McKinnon, a fifth grade math and science teacher at Lewisburg Elementary School in the DeSoto County School District, is among more than 140 teachers nationwide that will receive the Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching (PAEMST). PAEMST is the highest recognition that a kindergarten through 12th grade mathematics or science teacher may receive for outstanding teaching in the United States. A member of MPE since 1996, Angela McKinnon has been an elementary educator for twenty-five years.

WILSON HONORED AS JSU ALUMNI EDUCATOR OF THE YEAR

Kristy Wilson, assistant principal at Steen's Creek Elementary in the Rankin County Schools, was recently honored as the Jackson State Alumni Educator of the Year. She has been a member of MPE since 2009.

MCCLATCHY RECOGNIZED AS ALL STAR TEACHER

C.B. McClatchy of Byhalia Elementary School in the Marshall County School District was recently honored as a 2018 All Star Teacher by the Blue Cross & Blue Shield of Mississippi Foundation. All Star Teachers are selected by demonstrating excellence in project development and using creativity when implementing the Project Fit America lessons and activities. Byhalia Elementary received $1,000 for its PE program and Coach McClatchy received $500. A member of MPE since 2006, Coach McClatchy also serves as an MPE building rep.

MPE MEMBERS TAPPED TO LEAD DISTRICTS

Dr. Ken Barron will lead the Yazoo County School District. A member of MPE since 2004, he previously served as principal of Neshoba Central Middle School.

Dr. John-Mark Cain will lead the Lauderdale County Schools. A member of MPE since 2012, he previously served as deputy superintendent for the Scott County School District.

Tyler Hansford will lead the Union Public School District. A member of MPE since 2014, he previously served as principal of Union Middle School.

Dr. Cherie Labat will lead the Columbus Municipal School District. A member of MPE since 2016, she previously served as assistant superintendent of the Bay-Waveland School District.
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, 2018, and June 30, 2019. 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 SCHOLARSHIP DEADLINES FOR 2018-2019

All guidelines and applications will be posted on the “Quick Links” section of the MPE website (www.mpe.org).

$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 4, 2018, by 4:30 p.m.

$625 NBCT RENEWAL SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE will award up to 10 National Board Certified Teacher Renewal Scholarships.
Posted on the MPE website in September
Due Date: October 26, 2018, by 4:30 p.m.

$500 LINDA ANGLIN TEACHER PREPARATION SCHOLARSHIPS
MPE student members who will student teach during the spring of 2019 or during the 2019/2020 academic year.
Applications sent in November to Deans of Education and Directors of Field Experience at colleges & universities.
Due Date: January 25, 2019, 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 22, 2019, by 4:30 p.m.

www.mpe.org  PAGE 9
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. 108 members submitted applications for the 2017-2018 school year, with forty-three receiving 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.

**Rebecca Jenkins**  
Moselle Elementary School, 5th Grade Math  
*Fractions: Discovery of the Unknown*  

Wow! What an awesome honor to be chosen to receive a grant from MPE. Thank you so much for funding this grant that provided a variety of materials to use when teaching fractions. The resources from this project allowed my students to have access to essential math manipulatives for exploring challenging concepts, such as fractions. By using manipulatives, they were able to overcome misconceptions and create a solid foundation for the understanding of fractions. The students were able to use the manipulatives to understand and model real-world fraction problems. For my students who are working below grade level and needed a visual to grasp math concepts, this helped bridge that gap. They are able to understand visually joining and separating fractions by using these manipulatives. My gifted and talented students used these to further their understanding of fractions. They create and visually demonstrate solving real-world problems involving fractions. My students and I are very grateful for your willingness to fund this classroom grant!

**April Dill**  
Starkville High School, 9th Introduction to Engineering  
*Turing Ideas into Reality with 3D Printing*  

My students and I would like to thank MPE for funding my project “Turning Ideas into Reality with 3D Printing.” With the $1,000 grant, I purchased one Afinia h400 printer and an assortment of filament colors, which have allowed my 9th grade Introduction to Engineering students to implement hands-on learning through the incorporation of teamwork, creativity, problem solving, engineering design, and CAD skills, all while learning about this emerging technology and its current and future uses. At this time, students are learning CAD skills that will be incorporated in their end-of-the-year project with the creation of a Happy Meal toy. Our class 3D printer has become a huge motivating factor in my engineering classroom and we appreciate the funding that would not have been possible without the MPE classroom grant.

**Paula Singleterry**  
Clara School, 5th-6th Grade Reading  
*Novel Study using Wonder by R.J. Palacio*  

The MPE Classroom Grant Program is much appreciated for funding a grant that provided a classroom set of the novel Wonder by R.J. Palacio and motivated my fifth and sixth grade students to enjoy reading. My goal was to involve my students in a novel study of a book that is captivating, well-written, and involves topics that are relevant to their experiences. They examined story structure, characters, plot, and themes by citing evidence from the text. In addition, students used journals to examine precepts and relate these ideas to their own experiences. An additional outcome was that students set a goal to become a “Kind Classroom” and became very aware of the needs of others and began a relentless quest to perform acts of kindness. With this grant I was able to purchase thirty hardback copies of Wonder, the Wonder Collection on CD, student journals, and 365 Days of Wonder: Mr. Browne’s Book of Precepts. The MPE Classroom Grant Program has provided my classroom with a novel study that I will be able to use for many years.
Regina Reddoch
West Jones Middle School, 8th Grade Language Arts
*Click, Click Away! Clickers for Successful Students*

“Click, Click Away! Classroom Clickers for Successful Students” provided the perfect opportunity for my 8th grade language arts students to excel in reading and writing skills, research skills, and publishing skills. My students began this project by reviewing reading and writing skills at the beginning of the year and practicing these skills throughout the year with clickers. As the students studied the Holocaust during a module with the anchor text, “Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl,” they conducted research on survivors of the Holocaust. Each student researched a specific survivor and wrote a biography of the survivor. Each of my classes created a class book of Holocaust survivors and we had them published through Student Treasures. This was a great project for my 8th graders and they loved seeing their writing published in a book. Thank you MPE! My students and I are very grateful for your willingness to fund classroom grants!

Kelly Beth Blanton and Maria House
Tupelo High School, 9th Grade English
*I am Author*

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that provided so many students with the opportunity to become published authors and their very own story in print. As ninth graders who are just beginning to take on more responsibilities and discover who they are, they are amazed that the list of optional career paths keeps growing right before their very eyes. What started as a neat project idea to enhance writing skills developed into one of the most rewarding experiences I’ve had as a teacher. Because of this grant, eighty students became published and many lives were touched. Thank you again, MPE.

Virginia Hill
North Pontotoc Elementary, K-4 Autism Spectrum
*Equipping Students with Autism with Skills for the Future!*

THANK YOU to MPE for funding the classroom grant “Equipping Students with Autism with Skills Needed for the Future!” This grant helped to create a positive and motivational learning environment for students to experience success regardless of their ability level. With the Shoebox Tasks, we were able to create a stimulating learning center at varying levels of independence. The daily work centers were able to meet the needs of all students by beginning at the most basic level and progressing to a more rigorous level. The materials in the program provided multisensory opportunities for students to engage in pre-academic and academic skills. The durability of the Shoebox Tasks will help to continue to provide success for a multilevel classroom for years to come.

Margie Sims Hudson
Richton Elementary School, 1st grade
*First Grade Techie Readers*

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that provided interactive learning games and activities via Kindle Fires and apps for first-grade students. Due to a lack of technology for the younger students at our school, I applied for a grant to put kid-friendly technology in their hands. The apps that have been utilized provide extra practice and remediation for our first-grade students in the areas of Language Arts, Reading, and Math. They are used daily during instructional time in three different classrooms with approximately sixty students. Through the grant, I was able to purchase ten Kindle Fires with childproof cases and four educational apps for first- through third-grade learners.
As we embark on a new school year, I wanted to take this opportunity to share some of the questions I frequently receive from members regarding their rights related to various situations in their respective districts throughout the year. This information is provided to assist you in making informed decisions related to your responsibilities and rights.

Before sharing some of the more frequent questions I receive from members, let me begin by encouraging you to read your employee handbook each year. Local policies change from year to year and educators are held accountable for complying with the provisions of their respective district’s handbook. Do not sign the form acknowledging that you have read and understand the information in the handbook if you have not done so. In addition, make sure that you have a copy of and uphold the Educator Code of Ethics, as you attested that you would do so when you signed your contract. You may find a copy of the Code of Ethics in the “Quick Links” menu of our MPE homepage at www.mpe.org.

How many course preps may I have and can I lose my planning period?

Process Standard 25 of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards governs course preparations and provides that “individual teachers (grades 9-12) are limited to three (3) course preparations per scheduling cycle or five (5) in the same subject/content area. Any request for an exception must be submitted in writing to the Commission on School Accreditation for review and action.”

Process Standard 24 of the Mississippi Public School Accountability Standards provides that “each classroom teacher, excluding career-technical teachers whose class periods exceed 50 minutes, has an unencumbered period of time during the teaching day to be used for individual or departmental planning.” Secondary teachers on a six- or seven-period day are to have a minimum of 225 minutes of planning per week, exclusive of lunch, while teachers on a block schedule are to have a minimum of either 225 minutes per week or an average of 225 per instructional cycle, exclusive of lunch. Elementary teachers are to receive no less than 150 minutes per week, exclusive of lunch.

If your district is not in compliance with either of these, you may file a grievance in accordance with your district’s grievance policy and cite these process standards OR you may report your concerns in writing to MDE’s Office of Accreditation.

Teachers in my district have always reported at 7:50 and could leave at 3:45. This year, we have to stay until 4:15. Can my district do this?

Yes. State law (MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-13-67) authorizes each local school board to set the length of their district’s school day. Teachers’ time is measured in contractual days, rather than in hours. Teachers are often assigned duties outside of the regular school day – i.e., PTO meetings, extracurricular events. These duties fall under “the employee will perform assigned duties during the school term” language of your contract.

My principal has placed me on a plan of improvement regarding my classroom management. Do I have any recourse?

While improvement plans are not addressed in state law, they may be addressed in local board policy. Educators should check their employee handbook and/or local board policies to determine if their district has a policy governing plans of improvement. Most districts do not, as plans should be individualized, but it is possible that a district may have a policy.
the absence of state law and local board policy, improvement plans are left to the discretion of each building administrator.

Plans of improvement should assist an educator in strengthening their practice. We all have room to grow as a professional. An educator may be placed on a plan of improvement for a number of reasons, with classroom management and student performance commonly cited as areas in need of improvement. It is critical that educators document their fulfillment of the plan via personal notes, emails, and copies of any artifacts developed in accordance with the plan. Educators do not have the discretion to refuse to complete a plan or to excuse themselves from a plan, as either of these could be grounds for insubordination and/or non-renewal.

I started out the year teaching 6th grade, but now my principal is reassigning me to 4th grade. Do I have any options?

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.

My principal won’t accept my letter of resignation. Doesn’t my district have to release me from my contract if I resign?

State law (MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-9-55) requires any educator wishing to be released from his/her contract to submit a written request to the local district and this request must include the reason for the request. Districts have total discretion as to whether they release an educator from a contract. Districts may release one educator and not release another. If the district denies an educator’s request and the educator then abandons (i.e., breaks) his/her contract, state law (MISS. CODE ANN. Section 37-9-57) provides that the educator’s license may be suspended for one school year. The same is true if an educator does not follow this process, but simply submits a letter of resignation rather than submitting the written request to be released.

May I distribute campaign materials at school for my friend who is running for office?

Attorney General Jim Hood issued an opinion during Initiative 42 in 2015 that “school employees may voluntarily participate in political activities as long as their participation in such activities is in the hours when they are not involved in their work-related duties.” Thus, you may be involved in and support political campaigns as long as you do so on your own time. Educators should never use school resources — i.e., time, equipment, emails — for political activities. While educators may not distribute campaign materials at school or during school hours, they may have political bumper stickers on their personal vehicles and they may volunteer on campaigns.

Educators may advocate for their students and school with their elected officials. Invite your elected officials to visit your classroom or your school. Use your own personal computer and email to contact your legislator, the Speaker, Lieutenant Governor, or Governor regarding a piece of legislation under consideration at the capitol. Your reaching out to your respective elected official will assist you in building a relationship with them that will encourage them to contact you for your thoughts on educational issues. Educators may share their personal thoughts on educational issues via social media or print media as long as they do so in accordance with any local board policies related to the use of these media.

MPE is here to support you throughout your professional career. Please feel free to contact our office (800-523-0269; kelly@mpe.org) with any additional questions you may have regarding these or other situations.
NBCT Network Attends National Board Academy

By Charlotte Walker, NBCT

“Every student deserves to learn from accomplished teachers.”
National Board Academy, 2018

July in Orlando is best known as a peak time for magical, fun vacations at The Happiest Place on Earth — you know—Disney World! But this past July, Orlando was also the location of the 2018 National Board Academy sponsored by the National Board of Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS). From across the country, 150 excited and committed teachers, advocates, and educational leaders convened with one purpose in mind: make sure every student has the opportunity to learn from accomplished teachers.

Thanks to the generous support of the MPE Board of Directors; Executive Director, Kelly Riley; and the sponsorship by the National Board, a delegation representing the freshly formed MS NBCT Network was among those gathered. I was honored to be part of the MS delegation, along with MPE Deputy Director Barbie Ferguson and National Board Director of Policy and Partnerships, Michelle Accardi, who is also a founding member of our network. We were pleased to have representatives from four of our six World Class Teaching Programs joining us as well. The 2 1/2 days of the academy were filled with opportunities to learn, connect, and collaborate with like-minded individuals committed to improving student learning.

We discovered so many things! Perhaps the biggest takeaway for me was how fortunate we are in MS to have private and legislative support for National Board Certification and a large pool of NBCTs already practicing. Many states have no supplement or stipend to support NBCTs; most states do not reimburse the certification fee. MS does. MPE offers scholarships for initial certification and renewal candidates. That’s pretty huge!

Then there are the 4000+ NBCTs in our state as noted by the NBCT Directory. I met a teacher from a large western state who was searching for anyone to help her recruit and grow a network of NBCTs in her area; counting her, there were three representatives from the whole state at the conference. We are in a prime position to prove the efficacy and impact of accomplished teaching! But where are our voices? For many MS teachers, certification goes unnoticed and their leadership potential goes untapped. Many are even embarrassed to admit they are NBCTs because they don’t want to come across as elitist or better than other teachers! We need to change this.

Now, more than ever, Mississippi needs accomplished teachers. Research shows the importance of education in raising people out of poverty and allowing generations to become progressively more productive and raising their standard of living. The most important influence on learning is the classroom teacher — not programs or money or magic formulas. We have proof that the NBPTS offers a solution to the problem of “how do we guarantee every child gets a quality education.” The NB journey leads good teachers to become better and struggling teachers to find their way. We need those of you who are certified to join the MS NBCT Network so we can capitalize on your investment in yourself and your practice. We need those of you are accomplished teachers but are not certified to sign up and begin your NB journey. Early service teachers, we need you to be prepare and be encouraged to seek certification to ensure a strong future. To those who feel they are struggling or who feel ineffective, here is a way to energize your career. The students of MS need us.

I leave you with this quote from the academy that sums up my journey through the process and the potential for prospective candidates: “National Board Certification is not about being better than someone else; it’s about becoming a better teacher than you were.” There is strength in community. For information about the MS NBCT Network, visit www.mpe.org.
The Mississippi Economic Council recognized Mississippi’s 2018 STAR Students and Teachers in April. MPE congratulates the following seventy-one members for being among the 330 STAR Teachers honored:

Darla Nash, Alcorn Central High School
Kristina Sawyer, Amory High School
Krista Weaver, Baldwyn High School
Carressia King, Bay Springs High School
Shiela Duncan, Biggersville High School
Sandra McKinney, Canton High School
Doralyn Killebrew, Central Holmes Christian
Zachary Osborn, Clinton High School
David Fehr, Clinton High School
Lisa Carter, Clinton High School
Vicki Shirley, Corinth High School
Leslie Horton, Crystal Springs High School
Ashley Webb, DeSoto Central High School
Kandice McLeod, East Central High School
Nancy Patrick, East Rankin Academy
Teresa Whitaker, Eupora High School
George Pennell, Forrest County AHS
Justin Evans, George County High School
Justin Harvison, Germantown High School
Blanca Lee, Gulfport High School
Anna Oswald-Daher, Hatley High School
Kimberly Murphree, Houlka High School
Heather Dickey, Independence High School
Jennifer Nance, Ingomar High School
Kristin Walters, Laurel High School
Monica Cullen, Leake Central High School
Lisa McMillin, Louisville High School
Becky Barron, Loyd Star High School
Mason Smith, Lumberton High School
Rebecca Temple, Madison Central High School
Laura Miller, Madison Central High School +
Jonathan Allred, McComb High School
Kelly Nichols, McLaurin High School
Kaye Truitt, MS School for Math & Science
Lauren Zarandona, MS School for Math & Science
Elizabeth Morgan, MS School for Math & Science
Lacey Hutchinson, Mize High School
Kimberly Fitts, Myrtle High School
William Scott White, Nanih Waiya High School
Gladys Pounders, New Albany High School
Thomas Richardson, New Hope High School
Karen Rebold, North Forrest High School
Erin Fortenberry, North Pike High School
Jessica Stroo, Northeast Jones High School
Trisha Gilbreath, Northwest Rankin High School
Laura Guidry, Northwest Rankin High School
Patience Crockett, Northwest Rankin High School
Jodie Duran, Noxapater High School
Andrea Clark, Oak Grove High School
Michael Brewer, Pearl High School
Lela Draughn, Perry Central High School
William Kirby, Petal High School
Sarah Rodgers, Pine Grove High School
Ginnie Curtis, Purvis High School
Debbie Reeves, Quitman High School
Elizabeth Knight, Richland High School
Laura Gray, Richton High School
Jenny Simmons, Salthill High School
Bradley Robbins, Sebastopol High School
Zachary Nobles, South Jones High School
Chander Jenkins, South Pike High School
Olivia Leann Vick, Southeast Lauderdale HS
Vijay Pacharne, Starkville High School
Michelle Green, Stringer High School
Amanda Inman, Tupelo High School
Beth Smith, Walnut High School
Stephanie Knight, Wayne County High School
Karen Deniakos, West Jones High School
Alton Smith, West Lincoln High School
Ryan Sutton, West Union High School
Melanie Swinne, Wheeler High School

+ Selected as STAR Teacher by two separate students.
MPE Regional Training

MPE is pleased to offer the following regional training sessions. Participants will receive .6 CEU credits for each full-day course. MPE will also offer 5 SEMIs for the Improving Student Achievement Through Counselor Effectiveness full-day course. Each session’s content is timely for educators during the 2018-2019 school year.

INTEGRATING CODING IN THE K-8 CLASSROOM: A hands-on coding training that is limited to the first twenty participants. The training will examine the CS4MS (Computer Science for Mississippi) Initiative, in which coding is a major component. This workshop trains teachers on how to teach computer science fundamentals through mediums such as Code.org’s curriculum and Google’s CS First program. Participants will get hands-on experience building programs that control robots such as Sphero’s SPRK+, Wonder Workshop’s Dash and Dot robots, and Ozobot. No prior experience necessary to attend this training. All participants must bring a fully charged laptop to the training. (No cost for MPE and MS NBCT Network members to attend and receive CEUs. Non-members must pay $25 to attend, which includes CEUs.)

- November 14 Hilton Garden Inn, Starkville
- February 7 USM Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach

INTEGRATING CODING K-8: THE NEXT LEVEL: This next-level training session is for instructors who have already started implementing basic coding concepts into their content areas and want to increase their own level of expertise. The training will be limited to the first twenty participants. All participants must bring a fully charged laptop to the training. (No cost for MPE and MS NBCT Network members to attend and receive CEUs. Non-members must pay $25 to attend, which includes CEUs.)

- October 19 Holmes Community College, Grenada
- January 17 Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl

IMPROVING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT THROUGH COUNSELOR EFFECTIVENESS: This training is designed for counselors and their principal, assistant principal, or a district-level administrator. Each school team should bring their 2018-2019 school year improvement goals. Participants will be able to set priorities for the counseling programs that affect the school improvement goals and student achievement. They will determine data to examine in developing a strategic plan for the school counseling program that supports school improvement and include accountability in their school counseling programs as they collaborate with one another sharing resources. The training will be limited to thirty participants. (No cost for MPE and MS NBCT Network members to attend and receive CEUs or SEMIs. Non-members must pay $25 to attend, which includes CEUs or SEMIs.)

- October 11 Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl
- October 22 Oxford Convention Center, Oxford

IMPLEMENTING MISSISSIPPI’S COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS – SCIENCE: This session will explore the components of the 2018 MCCRS for Science using hands-on activities and group discussions. Teachers will deepen their own content and pedagogical expertise by working with peer teachers to outline and plan instruction while sharing ideas about activities and resources. (MPE and MS NBCT Network members receive CEUs free of charge and non-members may receive CEUs for $15.)

- K-2 SCIENCE TRAINING
  - November 8 Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl
  - January 14 Northwest Community College, Oxford

- 3-5 SCIENCE TRAINING
  - November 6 Holmes Community College, Attala Center, Kosciusko
  - January 31 Marion County BusinessPlex, Columbia

- 6-8 SCIENCE TRAINING
  - November 1 Greenville Higher Ed. Center, Greenville
  - February 13 Lake Terrace Convention Center, Hattiesburg

- 9-12 BIOLOGY TRAINING
  - October 10 Hampton Inn, Hernando
  - December 4 William Carey Tradition Campus, Gulfport
  - January 23 The Mill Conference Center, Starkville
  - February 19 Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl

IMPLEMENTING MISSISSIPPI’S COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS STANDARDS – SOCIAL STUDIES: This session will share techniques and strategies that will support student learning across the full spectrum of courses under the 2018 MCCRS for Social Studies. Session participants will grasp strategies and activities that will increase engagement and deliver content aligned with the 2018 social studies content standards. MPE and MS NBCT Network members receive CEUs free of charge and non-members may receive CEUs for $15.)

- K-5 SOCIAL STUDIES
  - December 6 Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo
  - February 11 Life Church, Laurel

- 6-12 SOCIAL STUDIES
  - October 25 The Grand Hotel, Natchez
  - January 29 The Capps Center, Indiana

To register, go to www.mpe.org, click on the “Professional Development” tab, and then click on the hyperlink for the respective training you wish to attend. If you need additional assistance, contact Barbie Ferguson at barbie@mpe.org.
School of Education

Undergraduate Programs
- Elementary Education K-6
- Secondary Education 7-12
- Physical Education

Online Graduate Programs
- Master of Education – Elementary Education, K-6
- Master of Education – Secondary Education, 7-12
- Master of Education – Mild and Moderate Disabilities, K-12
- Master of Education – Teaching and Learning Globally
- Master of Education – Emotional and Behavioral Disorders
- Specialist in Education – Instructional Leadership
- Specialist in Education – Emotional and Behavioral Disorders

Hybrid Graduate Programs
- Master of Education – Gifted Education, K-12
- Master of Education – Dyslexia Therapy
- Master of Education – Educational Leadership
  (Administration Certification)
- Master of Education – Interscholastic Athletic Administration
- Master of Education in the Art of Teaching (Alternate Route)
- Specialist in Education – Educational Leadership
  (Administration Certification)

Doctoral Programs
- Doctor of Education – Educational Leadership
- Doctor of Education – Higher Education Administration
- Doctor of Philosophy – Higher Education Administration

wmcarey.edu/education education@wmcarey.edu (601) 318-6600
Welcome back, teachers and school leaders. I look forward to another year of outstanding teaching and learning across the state and to discovering new ways the Mississippi Department of Education can partner with you in your work to help students reach high expectations.

The Mississippi Department of Education continually evaluates the technical assistance and professional development that we provide to educators so that we can provide the support you need. We recently published a comprehensive guide to help educators meet the needs of Mississippi’s English learner (EL) students.

The guide, Mississippi English Learner Guidelines: Regulations, Funding Guidance and Instructional Supports, provides teaching resources and practical approaches to managing the day-to-day instruction of EL students. You can find the guide and other resources on our website (www.mdek12.org).

In addition, MDE is developing a training module around assessment literacy. This new professional development will be designed to help educators use and interpret assessment data to inform instruction more effectively. We look forward to announcing that training soon.

For now, I want to draw your attention to two initiatives that the MDE will be promoting throughout the school year – 3rd grade reading and diploma endorsements. Both initiatives will be important to parents and communities and we will be releasing new materials that highlight this work.

Community support of literacy is a key part of ensuring that all students become proficient readers. It is important that we don’t let up on our statewide effort to improve literacy because this school year, 3rd graders will have to reach a higher bar to demonstrate they are ready for 4th grade reading instruction. As you know, up until this past school year, 3rd graders had to score “above the lowest achievement level” to qualify for promotion. Starting this year, 3rd graders will need to score “above the lowest two achievement levels.” This is level 3 on the reading portion of the MAAP English Language Arts test. Level 3 is one step closer to proficient, which is level 4.

We are also offering new opportunities for high school students to make their high school diploma more valuable. Incoming 9th graders get to choose whether they want to work towards a standard high school diploma or take additional classes to earn an academic or career and technical education endorsement.

The options give students the chance to get the most out of their high school experience. Each diploma option will prepare them to be successful after graduation, whether that be in college, the workforce, or a career and technical training program.

I’m excited that Mississippi high schools offer different opportunities to make sure all students graduate prepared for the future and the Mississippi institutions of higher learning join me in that excitement. Beginning in 2022, freshmen entering Mississippi’s public universities who earn an academic or distinguished academic diploma endorsement from the state’s public school districts will receive automatic enrollment into any of the state’s public universities and will be placed in credit-bearing courses.

These initiatives and others that will be rolled out as the school year progresses are all designed to help our students to reach their dreams. Without your hard work, the successes we’ve achieved over the years would be impossible. As always, I value your dedication to the profession and I hope you have a successful school year.
The beginning of a new school year brings a certain kind of excitement that is hard to find beyond the classroom. The beginning of this school year also marks a new beginning in my career, as I begin my tenure as Commissioner of Higher Education. I am honored and excited to begin this new chapter.

Education on all levels is vitally important to our students and the future of our state. As educators, your work is vital and should be valued by your students, their families, and your communities. I have been educated in Mississippi’s public schools and public universities and was fortunate to have many wonderful teachers and professors along the way. I owe each one of them a debt of gratitude.

I have also spent my career in Mississippi’s public university system, working through the faculty ranks and earning tenure at Mississippi State University, serving as Deputy Commissioner at the Institutions of Higher Learning, serving as Acting President at Mississippi Valley State University, and most recently, serving as President of Alcorn State University. I understand education in Mississippi and the transformational role it plays in the lives of our students and the future of our state.

Raising the educational attainment level of our state is imperative for our collective future. It begins by having more students graduate from high school. We also need more Mississippians to earn a credential of value beyond that. We need more Mississippians with associate’s degrees and more with bachelor’s degrees.

When we compare our state to other states, such as Massachusetts, they have much higher educational attainment rates and higher median household income, but lower poverty, infant mortality, unemployment, and incarceration rates. This is no coincidence. Having more Mississippians with a bachelor’s degree will increase our median household income and decrease poverty, infant mortality, unemployment, and incarceration rates.

In fact, if we can raise the percentage of Mississippians who hold a bachelor’s degree from the current rate of twenty-two percent to the national average of thirty-two percent, we could significantly increase our median household income, individual income tax collections, and total state revenue collections.

With increased income and decreased expenditures on incarcerations, the state will have more resources to devote to K-12 education, infrastructure, and higher education.
It is almost the beginning of a new school year. Faculty return to the college and begin preparations to kick off fall semester courses, meet the new faces on campus, and look forward to a season with cooling temperatures and football in the air. In keeping with that theme, students have opportunities to explore new community and junior college programs of study, student activities, and their new college home.

Mississippi community and junior colleges provide opportunities to people to for a better quality of life through education and training. Partnering with K-12, universities, businesses, and a host of other agencies, community and junior colleges provide the innovative programs and career pathways to develop Mississippi’s workforce. Through work-based learning opportunities like apprenticeships, students earn while they learn, build their résumé through on-the-job training, and have opportunities to connect with people. With career and technical programs culminating in a national credential, employers know students are trained to industry standards and prepared to succeed in the workforce. Because the community and junior college remains affordable to attend, students finishing and transitioning into the workforce have little to no debt, which means more money in their pockets.

It has become more important than ever before to engage students early with awareness and career exploration, following a secondary education career pathway, and build the foundation for success as a college-ready/career-ready high school graduate. Mississippi’s community and junior colleges have partnered with K-12 to ensure this happens through exposure to careers, youth apprenticeship opportunities, and dual enrollment/dual credit to speed up college completion. Beginning in the 2019 fall academic term, students who have earned successful Advanced Placement (AP) Exam scores of 3 or higher and enroll at one of Mississippi’s public community and junior colleges will be assured college course credit. Students are assured a seamless transfer of coursework from the community and junior college to one of Mississippi’s public universities through a statewide articulation agreement. Adult students looking for new pathways to financial independence and personal growth have a large selection of education and training opportunities to fit their lifestyle. More than ever before, students have opportunities to earn credit while on the job, attend college at a time which aligns with their schedule, and receive credit for prior learning, competencies, or experience.

Countless studies show the value of a community college certificate and degree. The data show higher earnings linked to the certificate and degree. With little to no debt for a community college education, and higher lifetime earnings, there is no doubt the value to the community college graduate is in expanded opportunities and better quality of life wages. Mississippi community and junior colleges consistently provide the best return on investment while providing relevant education and training needed to advance opportunities for people right here in the great magnolia state. Expanding opportunities, higher wages, and increased spending capacity fuels the local and state economies.

As another school year begins, take the opportunity to thank community and junior college faculty, staff, and administrators for dedicating their careers to advancing Mississippi by investing in educating the state’s future workforce.

Dr. Andrea Scott Mayfield
MCCB Executive Director
TOWNSEND SELECTED FOR NATIONAL WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP CONSORTIUM

Dr. Sue Townsend, superintendent of the Rankin County Schools, has been selected to participate in AASA, the School Superintendents Association’s 2018 National Women’s Leadership Consortium. She is one of only twenty women superintendents from throughout the nation chosen to participate in the consortium, which is designed to bring successful women leaders together to identify and address barriers women face when aspiring to top leadership positions in K-12 education. Dr. Townsend has been a member of MPE since 2016.

OGLESBY HONORED FOR READING PROMOTION EFFORTS

During this past spring’s Fay B. Kaigler Children’s Book Festival held at the University of Southern Mississippi, Venetia Oglesby of New Hope Elementary in Lowndes County received the 2018 Kaigler-Lamont award. This award recognizes distinguished accomplishments in promoting children’s reading by librarians and teachers in Mississippi schools and by children’s librarians in the public libraries of Mississippi. Venetia has been a member of MPE since 2003.

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The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) honored Whitney Drewrey, 3rd – 5th grade teacher of Mild/Moderate and Severe/Profound students at Lafayette Upper Elementary School in the Lafayette School District, this past April as the 2018 Mississippi Teacher of the Year. MDE honored Dr. Howard Savage, principal of Quitman High School in the Quitman School District and a recent member of MPE, as the 2018 Mississippi Administrator of the Year. Congratulations to these outstanding educators for their commitment and service to their students. MPE is proud to congratulate and honor the following members who were recognized as their respective district’s 2018 Teacher or Administrator of the Year.

**TEACHERS OF THE YEAR**

- Brianna Caradine, Calhoun County
- Shelia Johnson, Choctaw County
- Robin Sistrunk, Forest Municipal
- Thelma Keith, Forrest County AHS
- Tara Melissa Graham, Greene County
- Tammy Marie Estapa, Hancock County
- Ainsley Harvey, Jefferson Davis
- Geneva Pigrim, Kemper County
- Connie Henderson, Kosciusko
- Daphne Nelson, Lamar County
- Cindy Wilkins, Lee County
- Melanie Hymel, Long Beach
- James Reed, Lowndes County
- Laura Leonard, Marion County
- Kaye Truitt, MS School for Math & Science
- Aaron Lyle Wallace, Newton Municipal
- Lamenda Hase, Ocean Springs
- Kierra Moore, Perry County
- Sam James, Pontotoc
- Marcia Russell, Pontotoc County
- Leigh Ann Davis, Poplarville (Congressional District 4 Finalist)
- Jana Comer, Rankin County (Congressional District 3 Finalist)
- Heather Cobb, South Panola
- Ryan Seth Sutton, Union County
- Velma Smith Rainer, Union
- Kelda Bailess, Vicksburg Warren
- Teresa Whitker, Webster County

**ADMINISTRATORS OF THE YEAR**

- Leigh Stanford, Amory
- Melissa Rogers, Covington County
- Christy Adams, Lowndes County
- Capucine Robinson, Madison County
- Chris Chism, Pearl
- Sherra Allen, Pearl River County
- Dr. Howard Savage, Quitman (Administrator of the Year)
- Elizabeth Mosley, Starkville-Oktibbeha
- Lorie McCalmon, Tishomingo County
- Melissa Thomas, Tupelo
- Demarius McFadden, Wayne County
Please join us for MPE’s 2019 Best Practices Symposium featuring **Gerry Brooks**, the Kentucky principal known for his humorous and encouraging social media videos. His focus is on encouraging teachers to improve their instruction through personal climate and culture strategies. He desires to help administrators focusing on how to lead all staff in a positive and constructive manner.

**Marshall Ramsey**, editorial cartoonist for the Clarion-Ledger, two-time Pulitzer finalist, and nationally syndicated cartoonist will also be with us. He will bring a fresh perspective to issues facing educators and public education.

The day’s agenda and additional details will be announced in December. Priority registration will open for MPE members in January. Registration will open for non-members in March if space allows. Mark your calendars now and plan to join us on March 30!

**Save the Date!**

**Saturday, March 30, 2019**

The Hilton
Jackson, MS

Registration for MPE members will open in January! Non-members may register beginning in March, if space is available.
WHY MPE?

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

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<tr>
<th>2018 - 2019 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATIONS</th>
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<td>Professional</td>
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†Liability insurance not included

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$10,000 accidental death & dismemberment coverage
$2,500 assault related property damage
Identity theft coverage
Graduate & undergraduate scholarships awarded annually
NBCT scholarships awarded annually
Non-certified personnel scholarships awarded annually
Classroom grant opportunities awarded annually
Free regional trainings offering CEUs to members at no cost
Unlimited professional advice available 24/7
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.