Gubernatorial and Lieutenant Governor Candidate Questionnaire

2018-2019 Classroom Grants
Star Teachers
Office Staff

Kelly Riley
Executive Director
kelly@mpe.org

Barbie Ferguson
Deputy Director
barbie@mpe.org

Stephanie Miller
Accounts Manager
stephanie@mpe.org

Kathy Goldsmith
Office Manager
kathy@mpe.org

Jessica Ridgeway
Receptionist
jessica@mpe.org

AREA DIRECTORS

Michael Goff
105 Carter Lane NE
McCall Creek, MS 39647
601-532-6556
(C) 601-384-6748
mikegoff@ftcweb.net

Brenda M. Smith
P.O. Box 616
Leakesville, MS 39451
601-394-2847
(C) 601-394-8370
ssmith55@lds.net

Cheryl Howard
700 East Friendship Rd.
Cleveland, MS 38732
662-710-7265
tiggerabc12360@yahoo.com

Julie Wilson
125 CR 434
Oxford, MS 38655
(C) 662-816-2753
jwilson2016lms@gmail.com

Randal Livingston
247 Livingston Road
Louisville, MS 39339
662-773-2577
(C) 662-803-8393
Jolivingston@hotmail.com

Kris Winter
1967 Oak Forest Rd.
Pontotoc, MS 38863
662-888-1740
kpwinter1010@gmail.com

MPE STATE OFFICE
P.O. Box 22550
Jackson, MS 39225-2550
Toll Free: (800) 523-0269
www.mpe.org
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*MPE Journal* is published three times annually by the Mississippi Professional Educators, Kelly Riley, Publisher.
Welcome to a new school year! Hopefully, by now everyone is settling into what could be an amazing year. New students. New lessons. Maybe new schools. It really is a great year to be an educator!

This year is an interesting one for us. We have just completed the primaries, but it’s not over yet. We have the general election coming up and we need to continue to let our teacher voices be heard. Many candidates and legislators are taking note that teachers are fed up with the way they have been treated for years. Please continue to rally around the profession and support public education at the ballot box. We also need to continue to hold those elected to their campaign promises!

Tomorrow when you walk into your classroom, look at each individual face. That is who we are fighting for. We are their heroes and they may not even know it. We are willing to do everything we can do to make sure that each one is as successful as they can be and many may only have us in their corner. As frustrated as I may get with the political climate or the demands and requirements of our profession, at the end of the day, I look at those students and know that they need me. They need me to make sure that they get the best education I can give them so they can move on. Years later, they will come back and thank you, and it’s the best repayment they can make.

As I write this, I have just returned from moving one child into her dorm at USM, said good-bye to another as she returned to State, made sure my son is registered for his last year at USM, and watched my youngest as she performed in her exhibition at the end of high school band camp. Those four are the most important people in my life (along with my husband), but I know that they would not be the people that they are without the influence of their teachers. My husband and I have tried to raise them the best we can, but every teacher played a part in shaping them into the adults (or almost adults) they have become. For that, I am thankful! Please continue to be that positive influence for every student in your class. Their parents have sent us the best they have and we are responsible for each and every one. If you get frustrated this year, please remember that they depend on us.

Finally, if you’ve never had the opportunity to read “Find Your Marigold” by Jennifer Gonzalez, please look it up and read it this week. If you have, make sure that you are surrounding yourself with Marigolds. It is way too easy to be influenced by the Walnuts. Make sure that doesn’t happen!

I hope everyone has a fantastic year and continue to #voteyourteachervoice while wearing #BlueforMSTeachers!
Kelly Riley

While only a few days of the new school year have passed as I write this message, the year will be well under way by the time our members receive this MPE Journal. In addition to focusing on their students and their classrooms, educators throughout Mississippi are closely monitoring developments in Mississippi's 2019 elections. MPE believes that as individuals, educators should be actively involved in the political process. This is particularly important in 2019, as the results of this year's elections will influence the future of public education for years to come.

Educators #VotedWithTheirTeacherVoice in the August 6 primary election and it had a significant impact on statewide and legislative races. In addition to Bill Waller and Tate Reeves facing each other in a runoff for the Republican nomination for Governor on August 27, several key legislative leaders lost their bids for reelection or faced runoffs. Your vote made a difference!

This issue of our MPE Journal contains responses to our candidate survey from the major candidates for Governor and Lt. Governor. The questionnaire covers a range of policy issues including funding, the teacher shortage, testing, and Mississippi's "brain drain." Please see pages 12-13 for gubernatorial candidates' responses and pages 14-15 for Delbert Hosemann's and Jay Hughes's responses. Be sure to exercise your right to vote in Mississippi's general election on November 5!

Find Your Voice: MPE's Legislative Advocacy Guide for Educators is now available in the “Quick Links” section of our homepage (www.mpe.org). The guide shares resources and best practices for Mississippi educators in advocating on critical educational issues, monitoring events at our state capitol, and contacting Mississippi lawmakers to encourage them to make the best decisions for public education students and educators throughout our state. I hope this new resource will prove beneficial to your advocacy efforts.

I always enjoy spotlighting the professional accomplishments of our members in my weekly emails, as well as in our MPE Journal. Please see page 8 for our “Member Spotlight.” We recognize our 64 members who were honored as 2019 STAR Teachers last April on page 22. If you have a recent accomplishment (educational degree, special honor/recognition, etc.) you would like to share with us – or if you are not receiving my weekly emails - please email me at Kelly@mpe.org.

Be sure to check out page 16 for our 2019-2020 regional training opportunities. This year's topics include teacher leadership, supports for EL learners, art education, and meeting the social and emotional needs of today's learners. In addition to our regional trainings, MPE offers numerous scholarships and grants to our members throughout the year to support their professional growth and instructional practice. Please take a few moments to visit the “MPE Grants and Scholarships” section of our website (www.mpe.org) to review the application guidelines and deadlines for each of these opportunities.

We are looking forward to our 2020 Best Practices Symposium featuring Dr. Todd Whitaker on Saturday, April 4, at the Jackson Hilton. Dr. Whitaker has written over fifty books, including the national best seller, What Great Teachers Do Differently. I hope you will plan to join us for this exciting day!
This is one of those unique years that the start of school coincides with Mississippi’s major elections. As you read this, the primary has ended (unless there are run-offs) and the campaigning will begin in earnest until the November general election. As educators focus on which candidates will best serve the needs and interests of our students, our teachers, and our community schools, it helps to keep in mind that interacting with politicians isn’t that much different than with students.

Hearing versus Listening. There is a big difference between hearing and listening. Hearing is merely the brain acknowledging words or sounds. There is no effort to comprehend or understand and therefore remembering what was said is unlikely. Listening, however, requires work and attention. The brain has to process and interpret what is being heard and make decisions on what that means. Like our students at times, some politicians are guilty of hearing but not listening. They “hear” us, but then seemingly ignore what we say. In either case it is very frustrating. A solution to both is the 3 R’s: Remind, Reinforce, Respond.

Remind. If students didn’t listen, or don’t like what they heard, then it will be easy for them to “forget.” Teachers find themselves constantly reminding students of what is expected of them, when assignments are due, or special events that will be occurring at school. The same is true with some politicians. Therefore, educators have to be willing to remind elected leaders constantly of the key issues affecting schools and why they are important.

Reinforce. Teachers constantly have to reinforce the behavior they want out of students. Whether it’s a sticker on a written assignment or simply telling a student “Good job!,” teachers know that positive behavior has to be constantly reinforced or it won’t usually happen. This is true with elected officials. Educators must constantly reinforce that they are paying attention to our leaders and respond appropriately. If a legislator votes correctly, tell them “Thank you, I appreciate your vote!” If she or he doesn’t, then tell them “That wasn’t best for our students — and here’s why.” Constant reinforcement is imperative to getting sound education policy from our elected officials.

Respond. What happens when a student doesn’t do as they should, even after reminding and reinforcing? Then comes the response. In schools it might be a call to parents, break detention, or some other mechanism, depending upon the severity. Teachers can’t put politicians in time-out, but they do have another tool they can use — they can vote. Mississippi educators make up one of the largest potential voting blocs in the state. If politicians know that teachers plan on using that power, they will carefully consider their actions.

Finally, if you haven’t already been on the MPE website (and why haven’t you?), there is a handy packet designed to help educators follow these 3 R’s when speaking with officials. I highly recommend this not only for this election but to follow our officials after they take office.

Remember, vote E for Education!

Shannon Eubanks, MPE Board of Directors
The MPE Board of Directors held its annual planning retreat June 12-14 in Biloxi. The board hosted a reception Wednesday evening for local educators and legislators. Among other guests, we were honored to have representatives Scott DeLano and Hank Zuber join us for the evening.

The board invited the four major candidates (Foster, Hood, Reeves, Waller) for Governor, as well as the two major candidates (Hosemann, Hughes) for Lt. Governor, to meet with the board in individual one-hour meetings on Thursday. These meetings offered candidates the opportunity to share their visions for public education with board members, as well as to solicit feedback from our board on particular issues. Board members appreciated the conversations throughout the day with the candidates who attended; Lt. Governor Tate Reeves declined our invitation. We shared a brief summary of each candidate’s comments with our members via email in late June. Due to the positive results and feedback of these meetings, the Board of Directors will seek to conduct similar meetings prior to future statewide elections and will video or stream the meetings so our members may review the complete discussion with candidates.

The board held its quarterly meeting that Friday. The board reviewed services provided to members during the 2018-2019 school year and discussed recent licensure issues, the accountability system, and the timeliness of contracts. MPE appreciates our directors’ continued commitment to our association and its members.
MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

CALDWELL RECEIVES GOLDEN APPLE AWARD

Tim Caldwell of West Lauderdale High School in Lauderdale County was honored by Meridian Community College this past spring as the Golden Apple Teacher of the Year. The award recognizes outstanding educators in east central Mississippi. A member of MPE since 2017, Tim has taught math for thirty-two years, the last twelve at West Lauderdale, his alma mater.

MPE MEMBERS GRADUATE FROM WCU

Congratulations to the following MPE members who graduated this past spring from William Carey University with their Ed.D. in K-12 Educational Leadership:

Meghan Cates, assistant principal of Mooreville Elementary in the Lee County School District, has been a member of MPE since 2013.

Ginnie Curtis, fifth grade special services teacher in the Lamar County School District, has been a member of MPE since 2007.

Kelly Marzoni-Gardner, principal of Purvis Lower Elementary in the Lamar County School District, has been a member of MPE since 2012.

Patti Permenter, Associate Director of Program of Research and Evaluation for Public Schools (PREPS), has been a member of MPE since 2006.

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

JOHNSON EARNS DOCTORATE FROM MISSISSIPPI COLLEGE

Letonia Johnson, Principal of Morton Elementary in the Scott County School District, recently received her Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Mississippi College. She has been a member of MPE since 2012.

LEE COUNTY ADMINISTRATORS EARN DOCTORATES

Four Lee County School District administrators recently graduated from the University of Mississippi with Ed.D. in K-12 Educational Leadership degrees. All four are members of MPE. Congratulations to: Jimmy Weeks, Superintendent of Lee County Schools; Leigh Anne Newton, Chief Academic Officer; Steven Havens, Federal Programs Director; and, Lindsay Brett, Principal of Plantersville Middle School.

KIRKLAND SELECTED AS NATIONAL BOARD FELLOW

Tammy Kirkland, Director of the World Class Teaching Program at the University of Mississippi, is one of five NBCTs selected from across the country to serve as a 2019 National Board Fellow. Each fellow will work directly with National Board staff to build valuable competencies and expand professional connections as they become even more influential leaders in the education community. Tammy has been a member of MPE since 2011.
**Recruitment Incentives**

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, 2019, and June 30, 2020. 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

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**MPE Scholarship Deadlines for 2019-2020**

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

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**$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, 2019, by 4:30 p.m.

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**$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 25, 2019, by 4:30 p.m.

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**$500 Linda Anglin Teacher Preparation Scholarships**

MPE student members who will student teach during the spring of 2020 or during the 2020/2021 academic year.

- Applications sent in November to Deans of Education and Directors of Field Experience at colleges & universities.
- Due Date: January 24, 2020, by 4:30 p.m.

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**$1,000 Graduate Scholarships**

MPE will award up to 20 Graduate Scholarships.

- Posted on the MPE website in December
- Due Date: February 21, 2020, by 4:30 p.m.
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. 99 members submitted applications for the 2018-2019 school year, with forty-two 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.

**2018-2019 Classroom Grant Recipients**

**Alison Rausch**  
Wheeler School, 5th-6th Grade Special Education  
*Art You Ready To Learn?*

From my classroom to you, thank you, MPE, for providing the funds to incorporate the *Art You Ready To Learn?* project into my classroom. While observing my students last year, I knew I had to revamp my way of teaching in two ways. First, I had to find a way to make learning fun again for so many of my students who struggle in academics and dreaded coming to school. Secondly, I also had to find a way to incorporate art into the weekly routine of my students because so many of them excelled in art and enjoyed this area of learning. I am forever grateful for the opportunity provided by MPE to meet both of these goals. Without a doubt, this grant provide me with support to purchase some much needed art supplies. These art supplies allowed students to learn academic lessons in a fun and meaningful way. While many may see this as a financial contribution, I see it as an investment into the future of the students. Many of them learned lessons they will carry with them into the future that cannot be measured by a single moment or grade. After seventeen years of teaching, I can say this has been the best year yet. I plan to continue this project during the next school year because I know the success of my students that parents and educators all noticed was ignited by making learning fun through the arts.

**Kristy Halle**  
Brandon Middle School, 7th Grade  
*Project Lead the Way*

Brandon Middle School would like to show our great appreciation and thanks to MPE for providing our students with funds needed to increase our class offerings to additional students. Our desire was to give more students the opportunity to explore computer science and engineering skills and knowledge through fun and engaging classes. We were able, thanks to MPE, to continue to grow our program and increase the number of students that are able to participate in *Project Lead the Way*. Our grant allowed us to purchase the needed supplies that our students required for their hands-on activities. We were able to purchase engineering notebooks, VEX robotics parts and supplies, and microbit controllers. Because we have the needed supplies, our program can continue to grow and provide other students with the opportunity to become possible future computer scientists and engineers.
Nicole Spinks
Bell Academy, 5K Self-Contained
Mindful Me

Thank you, MPE, for funding the Mindful Me classroom grant that allowed my students to practice yoga and mindfulness in our classroom daily. The inclusion of a morning “Mindful Moment” afforded my students the opportunity to reflect on their day and choices; they began to accept responsibility for their own choices and actions. In addition, they began regulating their emotions, reacting to emotions in a more positive manner, and became encouragers for one another. I also witnessed growth in communication: listening and speaking skills. Including a yoga center in our daily instructional centers allowed students to be up moving in a structured way and allowed them to improve fine motor, gross motor, balance, and listening skills. After visiting the yoga center, students were more attentive at their teacher-directed centers, increasing academic growth. Through this grant, I was able to complete my Mindful Educator Essentials certification, gain mindfulness curriculum for our classroom, purchase yoga DVDs, books, posters, storage and six yoga mats (enough for a center rotation).

Alison Wade
Kossuth High School, 9th Grade Biology
Onion Cell Lab

Thank you, MPE, for funding the classroom grant that allowed high school biology students to be a part of an enriching lab experience. The new microscopes enabled each student to view actual cells and organelles within the cells. This is a great opportunity to prepare high school students for college and/or career. Thank you, MPE!

Yashica Suddeth
Jefferson County Elementary, 3rd Grade ELA
Literacy: The “Center” of Attention

In my classroom, literacy gets ALL the attention simply because it’s what I teach! (third grade ELA [English Language Arts]). As a third grade ELA teacher, my classroom is required to have independent centers that address the five strands of literacy. Well, as I was perusing the Lakeshore website, looking for items that I could use to rev up my centers, I received an email from MPE that introduced the availability of a classroom grant. After reading about all the grant offered, I quickly became interested. This was a great way to help with the expenses I was about to incur with purchasing items for my classroom centers and library. After applying for and receiving the grant, I was able to purchase several items for comprehension, fluency, vocabulary, writing, and teacher-led centers.

Kathy Peoples
Newton County Elementary, 4th Grade Math and Science
Weather and Climate

Thank you, MPE, for providing the classroom grant that allowed me to purchase an outside weather station, Weatherlink software, and various materials for hands-on activities in the classroom and in the science lab. In years past I have wanted to purchase a weather station for two reasons. One was to give my students something “real” to view when learning about weather and climate. The second was to allow my students the opportunity to analyze real-time data from right outside our classroom door. With this grant I was able to accomplish these goals and so much more. The materials I purchased gave my students the opportunity to create their own weather instruments, which in turn allowed them to take ownership for what they were learning. The items purchased with this money will have a lasting impact on students for years to come.
While MPE does not endorse political candidates, we encourage our members to be actively involved in the political process and to exercise their right to vote. MPE sent a questionnaire in June to the four leading candidates in the Governor’s race. Jim Hood’s and Tate Reeves’s responses to selected questions from that questionnaire are presented below for your reference in deciding who you will vote for in Mississippi’s November 5 General Election.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Jim Hood</th>
<th>Tate Reeves</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you see as the biggest challenge facing educators today?</td>
<td>Nearly all the issues facing educators today stem from leadership that doesn’t respect teachers for the valuable public servants they are. We can address this issue in a few ways. I would start by paying our teachers wages that reflect their commitment to our children. I’d also like to see teaching included as a profession at state career fairs and incorporated into the state’s workforce development strategy. We need a governor that respects and values teachers and will fight for the people educating our children.</td>
<td>Recruiting and retaining highly skilled teachers is critical for our students’ success. Studies cite a top reason that teachers leave the profession is lack of administrative support. As Governor, I want to return authority back to the classroom so they can manage it as they see fit. From limiting the amount of needless testing to managing student discipline, I will support legislative and regulatory changes that empower teachers to focus on students, not structure.</td>
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<td>What is your top priority for strengthening and advancing public education in Mississippi?</td>
<td>My top priority for strengthening public education is phasing in a statewide pre-kindergarten program for Mississippi four-year-olds. Children attending state-funded Early Learning Collaboratives in Mississippi are consistently scoring high on kindergarten readiness assessments, and are more prepared to learn on the first day of kindergarten than their peers who haven’t attended pre-k. We need to fully fund the ELC program, and expand beyond that to ensure every four-year old has access to some form of pre-k.</td>
<td>One thing I’ve learned is that if we expect more of our students, they’ll live up to those higher expectations. Our education improvement levels are outpacing the nation, and our graduation rate stands at 84 percent — an all-time high. I will continue focusing on achieving our goals by investing in programs that impact student achievement, such as teacher supply funds and literacy coaches; expanding pre-kindergarten collaboratives; and providing parents with more choice in their child’s education.</td>
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<td>Do you believe local communities should be responsible for a greater portion of education funding in our state?</td>
<td>No. I think the state should step up and fully fund public education through the MAEP funding formula before we ask local communities to spend more. In the past seven years, our legislative leadership has underfunded our public schools by $1.67 billion, and next school year they will have underfunded schools by nearly $2 billion. Our educators and children deserve more from the state before we ask local communities to pay more.</td>
<td>As Lt. Governor, I supported modernizing the state’s decades-old education funding formula to a new method that would determine funding needs based on factors like rurality, student characteristics (like gifted and special needs), and English Language Learners. However, I did not support changing laws to require additional investment from local communities because I believe the state has a responsibility to ensure current dollars are being used to provide high-quality education to our students.</td>
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<td>What is your solution for Mississippi’s teacher shortage?</td>
<td>The first step in solving the teacher shortage is showing educators we value the work they do by increasing teacher salaries. As governor, I’d like to see Mississippi’s average teacher pay raised to the Southeastern average. Additionally, we can help reverse the teacher shortage by expanding scholarship opportunities for</td>
<td>Our schools of education have seen a decline in their programs, jeopardizing Mississippi’s pipeline for quality teachers. We must look at innovative solutions to alleviate this problem, including programs which connect military service men and women to classroom teaching opportunities; consider</td>
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<td>(Continued from page 12)</td>
<td>education students, offering tuition forgiveness or reduced tuition for teachers, and creating pathways for the 8,500 paraprofessionals and education supports staff working in our schools.</td>
<td>giving local school districts the option to hire more non-traditional staff, such as citizen experts; and tapping into the existing teacher pool by incentivizing college professors to serve as “adjunct faculty” at nearby schools.</td>
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<td>What is your solution to the concerns regarding state testing that will still allow Mississippi to meet federal guidelines and still assess state standards?</td>
<td>I recognize the role and importance testing plays in gauging student achievement. As governor, I will seriously evaluate federal guidelines, how much students are tested, what they’re being tested on, and identify unneeded or duplicate testing in our schools.</td>
<td>Students suffer when teachers are forced to focus on bureaucratic testing, not classroom learning. Yet, a recent nonprofit survey found that many tests teachers are asked to administer are required by the local school district, not federal or state policies. I firmly believe we must put an end to unnecessary testing by limiting the number of testing days allowed per school year, in addition to fighting efforts to impose more statewide assessments.</td>
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<td>Do you support the diversion of federal and state funds from public schools to nonpublic schools, home schools or virtual schools via vouchers, tuition tax credits, scholarships, individualized education funds (IEFs), or some other means?</td>
<td>No. Mississippi public schools are already severely underfunded, and we place near the bottom in national rankings of per pupil spending. We shouldn't take taxpayer dollars from our public schools and hand them over to private organizations who aren't held to the same accountability standards. Additionally, research shows voucher programs tend to have a negative effect on student outcomes. In Louisiana, voucher students were 24-50% more likely than public school students to fail basic assessments.</td>
<td>What I support is simple: giving parents more choice in their child’s education. No two children learn in the same way, and I support an education system that reflects the diversity of our student population. From highly-qualified charter schools to individualized education scholarship accounts for special needs students, I believe giving parents more options will continue to help improve educational outcomes.</td>
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<td>What is your vision for Mississippi’s community colleges and universities for the next decade?</td>
<td>My main vision centers around implementing a statewide, tuition-free community college system. Several counties in Northeast Mississippi already have this program. By doing this, we can provide relief to families who may not be able to afford four years of university tuition and offer a path for further education to students that might not see a four-year degree as their best option. I’d also like to expand scholarship and tuition forgiveness programs, especially for future educators.</td>
<td>Workforce development will be one of the most critical issues facing our next governor, and our higher education system will play a key role in helping to meet the demands of our economic future. I envision a closer alliance among K-12, community colleges, and universities to lead us toward a system in which students can transition seamlessly from the classroom to the workforce with the skills they need to get and keep a job.</td>
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<td>According to a report prepared for the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in 2016, only slightly more than half of the people who graduate from Mississippi’s eight public universities are still working in the state five years after they graduate. What can we do as a state to prevent this brain drain?</td>
<td>Between 2010-17, we lost about 32,400 millennials—nearly the population of Tupelo. We must reverse this disturbing trend if we want Mississippi to move forward. I think we can do this by strengthening our education system so graduates have good schools to send their children. Additionally, we need to focus economic development on expanding Mississippi businesses and creating good jobs so graduates can earn a living to raise families here, not move out of state to earn a decent wage.</td>
<td>We need to continue to cut regulations and pass sensible policies that will encourage businesses to move to Mississippi, creating jobs and incentivizing graduates to pursue meaningful careers here in Mississippi. We also need to communicate the workforce needs in our state to students who are in the process of choosing their career paths and encourage them to study in fields that will pay dividends immediately after graduation without having to leave the state.</td>
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While MPE does not endorse political candidates, we encourage our members to be actively involved in the political process and to exercise their right to vote. MPE sent a questionnaire in June to the leading candidates in the Lt. Governor’s race. Delbert Hosemann’s and Jay Hughes’s responses to selected questions from that questionnaire are presented below for your reference in deciding who you will vote for in Mississippi’s November 5 General Election.

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<td>What do you see as the biggest challenge facing educators today? How will you address this issue?</td>
<td>After meeting with hundreds of educators across the State, it is clear they face many significant challenges: budget shortages, low pay, overwhelming state/federal regulations, testing requirements, and achievement barriers like systemic poverty. I have committed to moving toward alleviating funding shortfalls, supporting pre-K programs, and valuing our teachers, our No. 1 education resource. This will take funding, and we are working on securing resources, some of which will come from the reorganization of state government.</td>
<td>Respect. Too many politicians who have never attended a public school or taught think they know better than educators. All members of the education committee would have to agree to shadow teachers for one full day in an “A,” “C” and “F” district. We would then focus on proper funding, reducing standardized testing, adjust the accountability model; away from focusing on a single test, and apply for an ESSA waiver to move to ACT and Work Keys.</td>
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<td>What is your top priority for strengthening and advancing public education in Mississippi?</td>
<td>My top priority is getting our teachers, our No. 1 education resource, the funding support they need to help our students succeed. We entrust our children to our teachers for eight or more hours a day. For this great responsibility, they should be paid as professionals. We also have to address our critical teacher shortage with innovative solutions, like incentivizing retired teachers to return to the classroom.</td>
<td>Proper funding. The M.A.E.P. should be adjusted to properly take into consideration Special Education, ELL, and high-poverty. Then, it should be fully funded. There should be greater flexibility in achieving growth of students, as they have in innovative districts and charter schools.</td>
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<td>Do you believe local communities should be responsible for a greater portion of education funding in our state?</td>
<td>When all of our public schools succeed, and more of our people are educated, our entire state benefits from more resources for basic taxpayer needs like solid roads and bridges. There are significant disparities among communities, however, as it relates to a tax base and sustainable income. For this reason, while it is important for local communities to play their part, we must start with a solid base of funding from the state.</td>
<td>Absolutely not. That is exactly why we have a vast disparity in educational resources from district-to-district. Students are students. The quality of their education opportunities shouldn’t be restricted by the tax base where they live.</td>
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<td>What is your solution for Mississippi’s teacher shortage?</td>
<td>We have to look to success stories in other states and innovative solutions to address our teacher shortage, which is impacting a significant number of Mississippi school districts. We must examine the merits of legislative changes to allow us to incentivize retired teachers to return to our classrooms and evaluate our alternate route programs for effectiveness and classroom outcomes. We also must value our teachers, both in terms of pay and non-monetary support.</td>
<td>Respect. Letting them teach. Veteran mentoring of 1-5 year teachers. Offering children of current and retired teachers free tuition at community colleges and reduced tuition for state universities. Increase the pay so it is competitive and enough that they don’t need part-time jobs. Give them a voice in the legislative process and an opportunity to vet and comment on all bills in the senate education committee. Student loan forgiveness for high-need certifications and areas, like dyslexia and autism therapists.</td>
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<td>What is your solution to the concerns regarding state testing that will still allow Mississippi to meet federal guidelines and still assess state standards?</td>
<td>Dozens of educators have shared with me their concerns about testing. Based on what I have learned, my greatest concerns relate to the amount of time spent testing (taking away from classroom instruction) and technology problems, particularly on the part of the vendor. All solutions are on the table, including the possibility of moving to a different test or vendor. Solving any technology deficiencies for our schools must also be a priority.</td>
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<td>Do you support the diversion of federal and state funds from public schools to non-public schools, home schools or virtual schools via vouchers, tuition tax credits, scholarships, individualized education funds (IEFs), or some other means?</td>
<td>No, diverting more funding from public schools is not an option. Every special needs child is legally entitled to a quality education. If a school cannot provide necessary services, a child should be able to attend another public school. If another public school cannot provide necessary services, the child should be able to attend a school qualified to provide such services, provided there are accountability measures attached to state money received.</td>
<td>Absolutely not! Public dollars are for public schools. Period. Every dollar diverted from a public school is harmful to those left behind. If we were properly funding our public schools, they would have the resources to have quality educators and resources in every classroom in every district, and psychologists, dyslexia, and autism therapists. The needs of every student could be met in our public schools.</td>
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<tr>
<td>What is your vision for Mississippi’s community colleges and universities for the next decade?</td>
<td>Many Mississippians will not receive a two- or four-year college degree, but all need a meaningful job for a meaningful wage. My first priority will be our K-12 schools. Our higher education community, particularly our community colleges, must become embedded in our high schools in offering dual-credit options and CTE. Higher education needs to work hand-in-hand with our K-12 schools to help lower student debt and provide practical skills useful in college or career.</td>
<td>Lower tuition in all, with one year of waived tuition in community colleges for all Mississippi public high school graduates. As proven in other states, this approach would enable these students to either get a head start on a 4-year degree or get training and skills in a certificated program.</td>
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<td>According to a report prepared for the Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in 2016, only slightly more than half of the people who graduate from Mississippi’s eight public universities are still working in the state five years after they graduate. What can we do as a state to prevent this brain drain?</td>
<td>One of the most important things we can do is grow our economy, which depends on growing our educated workforce. This is not possible without great public schools. Our economic development package will focus on growing Mississippi businesses or attracting new businesses with 25 to 250 employees to create job opportunities for graduates. More job opportunities and wage growth keeps our graduates here.</td>
<td>Focus on passing laws about policy and inclusion, instead of passing laws about morals so you can get a snazzy headline the next day, and the court battles for years. We must have technology in all parts of the state, invest in development in all 82 counties. We must develop policies that make our young graduates feel they are welcome here and there is hope for a brighter future.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
MPE Regional Training

MPE is pleased to offer the following regional training sessions. Participants will receive .6 CEU credits for each full-day course. Each session’s content is timely for educators during the 2019-2020 school year. There is no cost for MPE and MS NBCT Network members to attend and receive CEUs. Non-members must pay $25 to attend, which includes CEUs.

EFFECTIVE SUPPORTS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE STUDENTS:
This session will orient teachers on the usage of data from the current EL assessments required by the state which include the following domains: Listening, Speaking, Reading, and Writing. Teachers will be provided with information on assisting with progress monitoring of EL students using alternate forms of the state-required EL assessment. Participants will be exposed to instructional resource materials from various sources and publishers. Teachers will also receive information on developing effective communication skills to include parents and guardians.

- October 17            Hampton Inn, Hernando
- November 7            William Carey University Tradition
                      Campus, Gulfport
- January 15            Holmes Community College, Attala
                      Center, Kosciusko
- January 30            Hinds Community College, Muse
                      Center, Pearl

TEACHER LEADERSHIP: Teachers exhibit leadership in multiple, sometimes overlapping, ways. Some leadership roles are formal with designated responsibilities. Other more informal roles emerge as teachers interact with their peers. Regardless of the roles, teacher leaders shape the culture of their schools, improve student learning, and influence practice among their peers. This session will explore the varied ways teacher leadership can be exhibited and developed. Career paths for formal leadership positions will be examined. Peer support opportunities will be provided.

- October 25            MSU Riley Center, Meridian
- January 16            Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo
- January 28            Copiah Lincoln Community College, Wesson
- February 12           The Alluvian, Greenwood

MEETING THE SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF TODAY’S LEARNERS: This session will provide foundational understanding and research of the importance of meeting the needs of the whole child in today’s learning environment. Today’s schools are increasingly attended by students from diverse cultural, social, and economic backgrounds. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of the impact of social emotional learning on student achievement, student behavior, and student engagement. The session will provide information on key social and emotional skills that students should develop. Teachers will also receive training on explicit lessons to teach social and emotional skills and providing opportunities for students to reinforce those skills during the school day.

- October 22           Hancock Leadership Center, Tupelo
- November 15           The Grand Hotel, Natchez
- December 3           Greenville Higher Ed. Center, Greenville
- February 7           Life Church, Laurel

ART EDUCATION ACROSS THE CURRICULUM: This training will provide participants with an understanding of incorporating arts throughout their curriculum, regardless of their content area. The session will incorporate participant-designed units in various content areas throughout the day, as well as sharing best practices with the group. Participants will receive content-specific activities for each of the four core subjects, as well as supports in integrating famous artists into the curriculum. Teachers will receive instructions and resources for creating hands-on activities.

- November 13           Hinds Community College, Muse Center, Pearl
- December 11           Hilton Garden Inn, Starkville
- January 22           Northwest Community College, Oxford
- February 4           USM Gulf Park Campus, Long Beach

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.
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
A new school year is an opportunity for a fresh start, whether you are a seasoned professional or a first-year teacher. The students you have this school year are looking for you to inspire them, to encourage them, to challenge them, and to increase their knowledge.

The responsibilities of an educator are great. The influence of a teacher is second only to that of a child’s parent or guardian because of the hours, days, and weeks you get to spend with students. Teachers are worthy of the honor and respect they so richly deserve. I thank you for your dedication and service.

The Mississippi Department of Education also realizes you need more caring and passionate teachers to join the profession. The agency is working to raise awareness around the need for outstanding teachers in every school. I am thrilled we have launched a statewide campaign, TeachMS. We hope this will encourage high school and college students and professionals seeking a new, rewarding career opportunity to consider teaching.

The campaign’s theme, “TeachMS – Empower and Inspire Generations of Change,” is designed to appeal to an array of potential educators who want to impact the more than 470,000 students in Mississippi. As part of the campaign’s development, high school and college students provided insight into what’s important to them if they are to consider a career in education. Also, current teachers from across the state have shared stories about what motivates them to commit to the profession.

If you haven’t had a chance to see our launch video featuring Melani Rankins in the Madison County School District, do yourself a favor and go to the TeachMS YouTube channel and watch it. It will affirm the value of your presence in a child’s life and will recharge your battery for the school year.

Since the launch of the campaign at the Elevate Teachers Conference in Jackson in July, we have heard from many current educators who want to share their stories and we will be promoting more of these stories on the TeachMS Instagram and Facebook pages. Why did we take this approach? Because when we sat down and talked with young people in high school and college, they wanted to know more about how education and teachers make a difference. That’s important to their generation – making a difference and creating change.

Mississippi is no different than the rest of the nation when it comes to a teacher shortage and the MDE is initiating several programs, including teacher residency and grow-your-own initiatives, to help address it. Every child deserves a highly effective teacher and we know a dedicated, professional educator can transform one student, one classroom, and one school at a time. We value your partnership in this work.

To find out more about the campaign, visit teachms.org and follow TeachMS on Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. If you have an inspiring story on why you became a teacher or on a student success, send it to teachms@mdek12.org and it may be shared as part of the campaign.

I wish you a successful new school year and I look forward to hearing more about the great work you are doing each day on behalf of Mississippi’s children.
We must also adapt and change how we recognize when and how skills are attained. The Mississippi Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning recently approved a policy to award academic credits for military learning.

The policy was recommended by the IHL Military Credit Policy Task Force, which included representatives from each of the eight public universities and was comprised of two chief academic officers, two registrars, two admissions officers, and two military/veteran specialists.

Following an in-depth review process, the course equivalencies will be posted online to inform prospective service members and veterans prior to admission. An IHL institution may award up to ninety hours of academic credit for military learning at the undergraduate level.

This policy will be a great benefit to students who are veterans and service members. It is also an excellent example of how our university system continues to adapt to the changing needs of our students and the workforce landscape.

As educators, this rapidly changing workforce landscape presents several challenges. We must prepare students with skills that will adapt and transcend a specific job. A student entering kindergarten today may still be in the workforce in 2079. We know the best defense against the changing workforce landscape is a good education.

The higher the level of education a person has attained, the more recession-proof he or she is today and the more adaptable tomorrow. The more educated Mississippi’s workforce is, the more our economy will be able to adapt, grow, and attract business and industry.

Through the Complete 2 Compete initiative, 1,176 degrees have been awarded, including 702 bachelor’s degrees and 474 associate degrees. Since inception of the program, more than 15,000 Mississippians have applied. There are currently 756 students enrolled in classes through the program. The website for the initiative has recently added a Connect 2 Careers section to help C2C Graduates connect with Mississippi employers looking for qualified candidates.

Just as today’s graduates must be nimble enough to adjust to shifts in workforce needs, our universities must be nimble enough to meet traditional and non-traditional students where they are and adjust to their higher education access needs.
As you read this edition of the *MPE Journal*, school has already begun for the 2019-2020 year at all of our secondary and postsecondary institutions. Classrooms are full of students that are eager to learn and who have their entire futures ahead of them. The successes they will have throughout their life can be attributed to the time and effort that you invest in them. Thank you for what you will do for all of our students!

Preliminary figures for Academic Year 2019 show that nearly 20,000 degrees, awards, or certificates have been issued from our community colleges. These graduates now have the education and skills to either move on to a university to further their education or enter the workforce in a high-demand, high-wage job. And these are just the graduates from the community colleges. When you factor in those from the secondary schools and universities, there were many thousands that saw part of their educational dreams come true. All are on the path to achieve whatever they dream in life.

An initiative that our office has been working on with other partner agencies is the Mississippi Works Career-Tech Scholars Program. This program will serve as a last-dollar scholarship for students that enroll in high-demand, identified career-tech programs to help pay the costs of tuition. Students must apply for and accept federal and state financial aid and if there is a gap in money owed for tuition, the program picks up that difference. The goal is to help direct students to jobs that are available today. The program would not be possible without funding from the Mississippi Development Authority. We are very excited about the potential successes of this program, as it will help fill the jobs that are currently available across the state with qualified employees.

I hope that 2019-2020 is a great school year for everyone. Each of you plays an integral role in the successes, both now and in the future, for our state. Thank you for the hard work, long hours, and late nights that you will put into the school year!
Good for us, Better for you!

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

It’s the twentieth year in a row we have received this recognition. Ross and Yerger provides innovative and cost-effective risk-management solutions for businesses across many industries nationwide.

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Congratulations to the following members who earned a free membership for recruiting during the 2018-2019 school year.

Lance Bolen, Stone County School District
Lori Brennan, Ocean Springs School District
Karen Bryant, Simpson County School District
LaShundia Carson, Alcorn State University
Melissa Chance, Lowndes County School District
Deedre’ Coll, Lamar County School District
Amanda Cummings, Ocean Springs School District
Sandra P. Edwards, Lamar County School District
Chanda Ferguson, Pontotoc County School District
Karin Hagan, Lamar County School District
Becky Hayes, Lowndes County School District
Rochelle Holston, Pearl River County School District
Cheryl Howard, Quitman County School District
Kimberly Jackson, Marshall County School District
Brad Johns, Rankin County School District
Marcia McCalmon, Benton County School District
Christie Moss, Hattiesburg Public School District
Anjanette Powers, Delta State University
Julie Price, Pearl Public School District
Amy Prisock, Mississippi State University
Stacy Reeves, University of Southern Mississippi
Traci Sullivan, Marion County School District
Timeka Thomas, Tate County School District
Kenya Travis, Hattiesburg Public School District
Devin Walsh, Lamar County School District
Lisa Williamson, Pontotoc County School District
STAR Teachers

The Mississippi Economic Council recognized Mississippi’s 2019 STAR Students and Teachers in April. MPE congratulates the following sixty-four members for being among the 342 STAR Teachers honored:

Nan Nethery, Alcorn Central High School
Jennifer Hood, Amory High School
Sandy Childs-Jones, Ashland High School
Krista Weaver, Baldwyn High School
Kristen Zemek, Belmont High School
Michael Burkett, Biloxi High School
Kara Green, Blue Mountain High School
Sam Hisaw, Booneville High School
Randy West, Brandon High School
Jennifer Foshee, Bruce High School
Doralyn Killebrew, Central Holmes Christian
Elizabeth Smith, Clarkdale High School
Vernita DeSha Burnett, Clarksdale High School
Michael Novinski, Columbia High School
Ashley Webb, DeSoto Central High School
Dawn Gaskin, East Webster High School
Jacqueline Lewis, Enterprise High School
Teresa Whitaker, Eupora High School
George Pennell, Forrest County AHS
Mary Higgs, Franklin County High School
Blanca Lee, Gulfport High School
Anna Oswalt-Daher, Hamilton HS, Hatley HS, and Smithville High School+
Melinda Kopp, Houka Attendance Center
Jennifer Nance, Ingomar High School
Jessica Morris, Kossuth High School
Danielle Yarbrough, Lake High School
Lisa Burnside, Leake Central High School
Jan Hansen, Long Beach High School
Marcus McCool, Louisville High School
Jan DeLaughter, Loyd Star High School
Mason Smith, Lumberton High School
Rebecca Temple, Madison Central High School
Krista Smith, McLaurin High School
Jack D. Jinkins, Mendenhall High School
Lauren Zarandona, MSMS+
Elizabeth Morgan, MSMS+
David Slade, Mt. Olive High School
James Meggs, New Hope High School
Michael Franklin, Newton County HS
Erin Fortenberry, North Pike High School
Brittney Shoemake, Northeast Jones HS
Trisha Gilbreath, Northwest Rankin HS
Andrea Clark, Oak Grove High School++
Lamenda Hase, Ocean Springs High School+
Faith Gibson, Pass Christian High School
Charles Brand, Pearl High School
David Merrill, Perry Central High School
William Kirby, Petal High School
David Brown, Pisgah High School
Sam James, Pontotoc High School
Debbie Reeves, Quitman High School
Stephen Westerfield, Richland High School
Sabrina Henderson, Richton High School
William Ray, Jr., Riverside High School
Stacy Hughes, Sacred Heart Catholic
Rebecca Brawner, Saltillo High School
Teresa Bulloch, Scott Central High School
Jackie Thompson, Sebastopol High School
Jessica Herrington, South Jones High School
Sara White, Tishomingo County High School
Greg Elzey, Tybertown High School
Eleanor Phillips, Warren Central HS++
Anna Smith, Water Valley High School
Stephanie Hodo, Wayne Academy

+ Selected as STAR Teacher by more than one student.
++ Inducted into STAR Teacher Hall of Fame, which is reserved for teachers who have been chosen STAR Teacher at least ten separate times. Only eighty-six Mississippi educators have reached this teaching milestone.
Please join us for MPE’s 2020 Best Practices Symposium featuring Dr. Todd Whitaker, author of *What Great Teachers Do Differently*. Other titles include: *Dealing With Difficult Teachers, Ten-Minute Inservice, Your First Year, What Great Principals Do Differently, Motivating & Inspiring Teachers, and Dealing With Difficult Parents*. Recognized as a leading presenter in the field of education, his message about the importance of teaching has resonated with hundreds of thousands of educators around the world.

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 April 4!

**Registration opens in January for MPE Members!**

Saturday, April 4, 2020  
The Hilton  
Jackson, MS

Register online at [www.mpe.org](http://www.mpe.org).

Register early so you don’t miss this day of networking and learning!  
Non-members may register beginning March 1, if space is available.
### WHY MPE?

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2019 - 2020 DUES</th>
<th>MPE</th>
<th>OTHER ORGANIZATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>$120</td>
<td>$493-$576</td>
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<tr>
<td>Couples</td>
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<td>First Year Professional</td>
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<td>Lifetime Retiree</td>
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<td>Non-Certified or Part-time</td>
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<td>Student Teacher</td>
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<tr>
<td>Retired Educator</td>
<td>$10†</td>
<td>$66-$70</td>
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†May reflect last year’s dues  †Liability insurance not included

### Your MPE membership includes...

- Professional liability protection of $2,000,000 with $3,000,000 maximum
- Legal assistance related to employment or professional matters per MPE policy
- $10,000 accidental death & dismemberment coverage
- $2,500 assault related property damage
- Consistent and economical dues-MPE has not increased dues in 11 years
- 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.