

Program of Research and Evaluation for Public Schools

MONTHLY MEMO

MARCH 2023



Harrison County School District

We are very thankful for our board members!

Dr. Lee Childress, Corinth School District
Dr. Amy Carter, Meridian Public Schools
Dr. Matthew L. Dillon, Petal School District
Dr. Cedrick Ellis, McComb School District
Dr. Carla Evers, Pass Christian School District
Dr. Teresa Jackson, Winona-Montgomery Schools
Mr. Jesse King, Leland Public School District
Mr. Chad Shealy, Vicksburg-Warren Schools
Mr. Corey Uselton, Desoto County School
Dr. Eddie Peasant, WCU Assistant Dean SOE

SAVE THE DATE

March 7 - Live Virtual Conference Session
March 14 -Live Virtual Conference Session
March 21 -Live Virtual Conference Session
March 28-Connect to Courage
March 31 - LAST DAY OF CONFERENCE

**Congratulations to all of our ELA and
MATH Achievement and GROWTH
AWARD WINNERS!**

**WE WOULD LOVE TO SHARE THE PICS OF YOUR
FACULTY AND STAFF. BE SURE TO TAG US ON
SOCIAL MEDIA OR SEND US YOUR PHOTOS TO
admin@mspreps.org.**

VIRTUAL CONFERENCE CONTINUES THROUGH MARCH 31

Be sure to go to preps.talentlms.com to earn 0.5 -2.0 CEUS or 5-10 SEMIS.
Visit our website www.mspreps.org to register! We have on-demand and live
sessions available through March 31!

Domain: preps Branch: conference

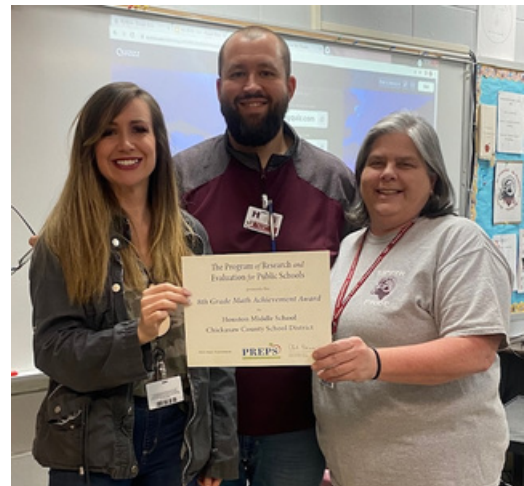
Congrats to our Growth and Achievement Award Winners!



Jefferson County School District

If you follow us on social media, you have seen many schools celebrating their PREPS Growth and Achievement Awards. We were thrilled to recognize the hard work of students, faculty, and staff.

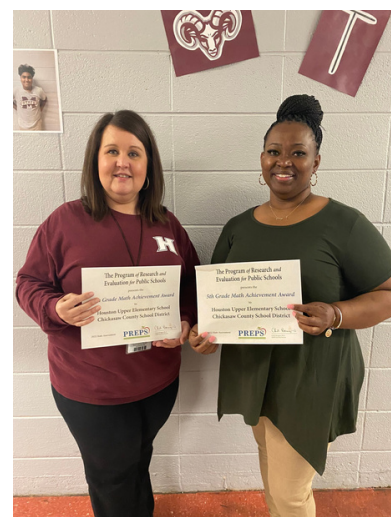
We were tagged on hundreds of photos! Here are just a few! Thank you for sharing!



Chickasaw County Schools



Canton Public School District



The Dan Merritt Courage Award was given at the first PREPS Winter Conference in 1996 to Dan Merritt for his continued service to the Jackson Public School System. In Merritt's memory, the award was established for a school district or an individual who is recognized for taking a professional risk for the greater good of Mississippi public schools.



Dr. Kim Benton

Dr. Kim Benton served as Mississippi's interim state superintendent from July 2022 until January 2023. She worked in public education in Mississippi for 40 years as a teacher's assistant, teacher, principal, executive director of special populations and federal programs, interim superintendent of Mississippi's School for the Deaf and Blind, and Mississippi's Chief Academic Officer. Dr. Benton was instrumental in helping to lead the state's successful education reform efforts. Dr. Benton's unfaltering allegiance to our MS Public Schools created a safe space for students and faculties to work and grow over the past 6 months. Her courage to see us through to the next chapter has been greatly apparent and appreciated.

Hugh I. Peck Memorial Research Award was established in memory of Dr. Hugh Peck, former Executive Director of PREPS. It is awarded to school districts, educational stakeholders, or other educational organizations that have participated in worthwhile research and development for the betterment of schools in the state.



Dr. Cena Holifield

Dr. Cena Holifield has worked with Mississippi Legislators to codify standards that benefit the education of students with dyslexia. These standards include the components required for dyslexia therapy training programs, the credentials of a dyslexia therapist, and the requirement for early dyslexia screening. Her professional mission includes meeting the needs of children with dyslexia through providing a model dyslexia school, training dyslexia therapists, and providing outreach to schools. Her work with the Science of Reading has gained national attention, and her tireless efforts have made a difference in the lives of many students.

PREPS Partner Award is awarded to the Partner who has generously given time, resources, and effort toward making a difference in Mississippi Public Schools.



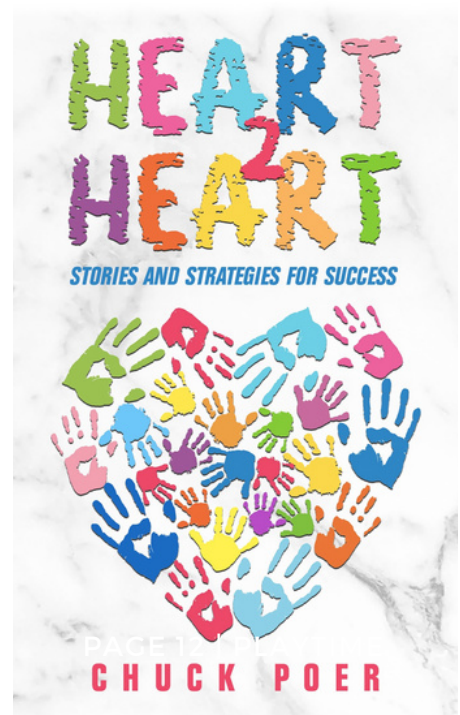
Mr. Chuck Poer

Mr. Chuck Poer, Kid's First, Inc. – Chuck Poer has over 30 years of experience as a classroom teacher, basketball coach, and K-12 principal—and has been an education consultant since 2007. He was named Mississippi Administrator of the Year in 2007 by the Mississippi Department of Education. Chuck has received national recognition for his leadership skills and his extensive knowledge of student assessment and data-driven decision-making. His inspirational sessions have encouraged teachers and administrators throughout the Southeastern United States. Mr. Poer has dedicated his time and talents to assisting with the Mississippi Rural Teacher of the Year program. Through this effort, he has awarded scholarships to high school seniors from the winning teacher's district. Mr. Poer is also the author of the book, *Heart 2 Heart: Stories and Strategies for Success* which features many personal stories from teachers and administrators that support his scholarships. Chuck has been a great friend and partner to PREPS and MS students, school staff, and faculties.

HEART 2 HEART

PREPS PARTNER AWARD

CHUCK POER'S BOOK, HEART 2 HEART, FUNDS THE \$5,000 SCHOLARSHIP THAT HE IS AWARDING TO A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT SELECTED BY THE THE MISSISSIPPI RURAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR. THIS IS THE 3RD YEAR FOR THE AWARD, AND HE HAS MADE A \$15,000 COMMITMENT TO MS STUDENTS WHO CHOOSE TO STUDY EDUCATION.



PREPS

PROGRAM OF RESEARCH AND EVALUATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS

2025 Awards and Conference Kick-Off

We had so much to celebrate!

PREPS is honored to host Mississippi Rural Teacher of the Year



2023

MS RURAL TEACHER OF THE YEAR



Mr. Kenneth Watson
Lauderdale County School District



La'Keshia S. Johnson
Okolona School District
MSREA - 2021



Susan Spiers
Picayune School District
MSREA - 2022

Congressional District 1 Rural Teacher of the Year



Barbara Lucas Okolona School District

Ms. Barbara Lucas is a Math teacher at Okolona High School in the Okolona Municipal Separate School District. One of the most notable aspects of her dedication to her craft is her tireless commitment to and love for her students and community. Following the realities Covid brought her and her students' way, Mrs. Lucas instilled an "I CAN" attitude in her students and inspired and collaborated with them to create the Passing with Proficiency and Growth Plan (PPG). The purpose of their PPG Plan was to instill a positive mindset as they prepared to "Pass the test, hit Proficiency, and show Growth" on the Spring 2022 state assessment. The result? They achieved the top math scores in the State!

In the words of Mrs. Lucas, "Positive mindsets enhance positive outcomes." She and her students made history. Mrs. Lucas shared, "Nothing is more satisfying to a teacher than seeing the smiles on your student's faces when they realize how proud everyone is of them." Among her many accomplishments, Ms. Lucas is the 2022-23 Okolona High School Teacher of the Year and the 2022-23 Okolona School District Teacher of the Year.

Congressional District 2

Rural Teacher of the Year



Dr. Ghia Lynn Vinluan
Leland School District

Dr. Ghia Lynn Vinluan, "Dr. V," teaches Biology, Human Anatomy and Physiology, and Biology I at Leland High School in the Leland School District. Before moving to the Mississippi Delta and pursuing a career in secondary education, Dr. V was a general surgeon at Rutgers New Jersey Medical School and educated at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine and UC Berkley. She is passionate about teaching and "empowers students through interactive learning, offering fun and educational lessons, and exciting science demonstrations. She is adept at helping students to overcome challenges and achieve academic goals."

Dr. V is a tireless advocate for her students, school, and community, as evidenced in her and her fellow educators' efforts to initiate a combination parent and community outreach plan that allowed for a revote and eventual passing of a school bond issue to support \$8.75 million of improvements at her school.

Congressional District 3

Rural Teacher of the Year



Kenneth Watson

Lauderdale County School District

Mr. Kenneth Watson teaches Law and Public Safety at Southeast High School in the Lauderdale County School District. Before starting the Law and Public Safety Program at Southeast High School in August 2019, Mr. Watson was a professional firefighter and arson investigator for the Meridian Fire Department. This depth of experience, commitment to service, and love for community fills Mr. Watson's classroom and impacts his students' motivation, community engagement, and academic achievement.

Mr. Watson "walks the walk" with his students. He is the Fellowship of Christian Athletes, Shooting Sports Club, and Skills USA sponsor; leads incorporation of instruction and awareness of human trafficking through a pilot program in partnership with the MS Attorney General's Office/Mississippi Bureau of Investigation/and Lauderdale County Sheriff's Department; facilitates students in volunteering at the local volunteer fire station; is enrolled alongside his students in an Emergency Medical Responder/Emergency Medical Technician Class; and is currently in the process of adopting one of his students.

In the words of Mr. Watson, "I want to be a positive example to our students and inspire them to accomplish the great things that I know they are capable of."

Congressional District 4

Rural Teacher of the Year



Amanda Reeves

Quitman School

District

Mrs. Amanda Reeves teaches math and serves as the Math Department Chair at Quitman High School in the Quitman School District. Within this role, Mrs. Reeves does not only focus on equipping her students with the needed math skills and content required for success in math but also instructs with the purpose of "training them with the habits of mind and perseverance that will make them enduring problem solvers for the rest of their lives." She does not tell her students that math is easy; instead shares that math and life can be challenging, but through practice, hard work, perseverance, skill development, and support, they can endure and succeed.

Mrs. Reeves's supportive actions extend outside her classroom into her school and community. Her peers recognize her as a supportive colleague and family partner awarding her as the "Talking Stick Designee" for giving teachers a voice during professional developments and PLCs and with the "Parent Partnership" award for her dedication to partnering and working with parents to provide exceptional services and resources to students. Mrs. Reeves is also the 2022-23 Quitman School District Teacher of the Year.

Congrats to Cohort 6 of the CEO Leadership Academy!



This is the time of the year that we say goodbye to our CEO cohort with celebrating their graduation. Fortunately, we were able to meet together in person and on ZOOM. Building relationships with administrators from all over Mississippi is one of the many outcomes of the PREPS CEO experience!



Dr. Sam Jones providing motivation to the CEO TEAM!



Dr. Wanda Maulding and Dr. Ed Leonard leading a discussion.

Congratulations 2022-23

CEO LEADERSHIP GRADUATES

Dr. Nadene Arrington - East Jasper Consolidated School District
Angela Boutwell - Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District
Kameron Burnham - Lauderdale County School District
Elizabeth Butler - Pascagoula-Gautier School District
Jonathon Chancelor - Covington County School District
Delisa Cole - Kemper County School District
Chris Coleman - East Jasper Consolidated School District
Stacie Collins - East Jasper Consolidated School District
Tammy Crosetti - Mississippi Department of Education
Kimberly Dawkins - East Jasper School District
Gretchen Gegenheimer - Pass Christian School District
Keraneisha Green - Meridian Public School District
Casey Hanna - Pascagoula-Gautier School District
Raina Holmes - Jackson County School District
John Jones - Lauderdale County School District
Keithsha Jones - East Jasper Consolidated School District
Tiffany Jones-Fisher - Meridian Public School District
Brian Jordan - Lauderdale County School District
Julie Kennedy - Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District
Lauren Lewis - Pass Christian School District
Frederick Lidell- Meridian Public School District
Jacob Lockhart - Hattiesburg Public School District
Yolanda Magee - East Jasper School District
Tyrone Marshall - East Jasper School District
Belinda McCune - Newton Municipal School District
Michelle McGill - East Jasper Consolidated School District
Jerrod McLain - East Jasper Consolidated School District

Congratulations 2022-23 CEO LEADERSHIP GRADUATES

Monica Miller - Louisville Public School District
Felicia Morris - Greenville School District
Jorine Neal - Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District
Kristie Nettles - Greenville Public School District
Dr. Brock Puckett - Pontotoc County School District
Milton Ray III - Harrison County School District
Derek Read - Pascagoula-Gautier School District
John Sallis - Leake County School District
Raegan Sampey - Picayune School District
Timothy Scott - Forest School District
Dr. Pamela Self - Canton School District
Erin Stockstill - Picayune School District
Sid Taylor - George County School District
Shannon Thomas - Meridian Public School District
Deidra Thompson - Picayune School District
Gefredia Washington-Nash - McComb School District
Victor White - Meridian Public School District



2022-23 CEO Cohort

VIP Teacher Academy

Winter 2022-23

We are also recognizing our first cohort of VIP Teacher Academy Participants - Congratulations to these teacher researchers!

Dawn Torries - Biloxi

Leo Green - Biloxi

Sarah Ann Silver - Biloxi

Ashtin Mancaruso - Biloxi

Miriam Garner - Chickasaw County

Devan Alexis Ulery - Lawrence County

Louisa Simmons - Leake County

Jennifer Fruge - Long Beach

Ryan Corley - Moss Point

Tia Cara Mitchell - Moss Point

Mary Leshe - Pascagoula-Gautier

Michelle McMillian - Pascagoula-Gautier

Rachel Shaddix - Pascagoula-Gautier

Michelle Rafach - Pearl River County

Tracey Henderson - Perry County

Kevia Davis - Vicksburg-Warren

Corlette Jones - Vicksburg-Warren





We have many to thank for a successful celebration!

THANK YOU!

[CLICK HERE FOR MORE PICS
ON OUR WEBSITE!](#)

PREPS is very grateful for the support and resources received from the generosity of The Phil Hardin Foundation and William Carey University.



Mr. Chad Shealy

Thank you for 7 years of service as a PREPS board member, and congratulations on your retirement from MS P-12 Schools! We look forward to seeing what the next chapter holds for you!



PREPS DISTRICTS

- Aberdeen School District
- Alcorn County School District
- Amite County School District
- Amory School District
- Bay St. Louis - Waveland School District
- Biloxi School District
- Booneville School District
- Brookhaven School District
- Canton Public School District
- Carroll County Schools
- Chickasaw County School District
- Claiborne County School District
- Clarksdale Municipal School District
- Cleveland School District
- Clinton Public School District
- Coffeeville School District
- Columbia School District
- Columbus City Schools
- Corinth School District
- Covington County School District
- Desoto County School District
- East Jasper School District
- Enterprise School District
- Forest Municipal School District
- Forrest County School District
- George County School District
- Greenville Public Schools
- Grenada School District
- Gulfport School District
- Hancock County School District
- Harrison County School District
- Hattiesburg School District
- Hollandale School District
- Holly Springs School District
- Jackson County School District
- Jackson Public Schools
- Jefferson County School District
- Jefferson Davis County School District
- Jones County School District
- Kemper County School District
- Kosciusko School District
- Lamar County School District
- Lauderdale County School District
- Laurel School District
- Lawrence County School Districts
- Leake County School District
- Leland School District
- Long Beach School District
- Louisville School District
- Madison County School District
- Marion County Schools
- McComb School District
- Meridian School District
- Moss Point School District
- Neshoba County School District
- New Albany Public Schools
- Newton Municipal School District
- North Bolivar County School District
- North Panola School District
- North Pike School District
- Okolona School District
- Oxford School District
- Pascagoula-Gautier School District
- Pass Christian School District
- Pearl Public School District
- Pearl River County School District
- Perry County School District
- Petal School District
- Philadelphia School School
- Picayune School District
- Pontotoc City School District
- Pontotoc County School District
- Poplarville School District
- Prentiss County School District
- Quitman County School District
- Quitman School District
- Rankin County School District
- Scott County School District
- Simpson County School District
- South Delta School District
- South Pike School District
- Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated
- Stone County School District
- Tate County School District
- Tunica School District
- Tupelo School District
- Union City School District
- Union County School District
- Vicksburg-Warren School District
- Water Valley School District
- Wayne County School District
- Webster County School District
- West Point School District
- West Tallahatchie School District
- Western Line School District
- Winona-Montgomery CSD
- Yazoo County School District

