

# School Focus

a glimpse into Mississippi's K-12 classrooms

FALL 2016 | VOL. 1 | ISSUE 1

## COMPUTER SCIENCE Pilot Program Takes Flight

Demystifying Data to  
Improve Outcomes

SPECIAL SECTION:  
Fine-Tuning the  
State Standards





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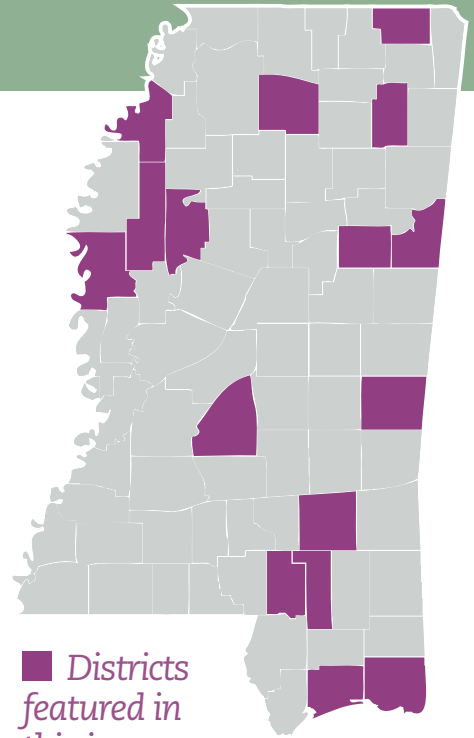
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# School Focus

## WELCOME

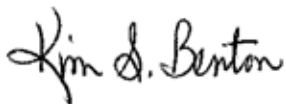
I am delighted to welcome you to the inaugural issue of *School Focus*, which gives you a glimpse into Mississippi's K-12 classrooms. Although we face many challenges around public education here in Mississippi, we also have many good news stories going on every day in schools across the state. Our goal is to spotlight those stories and provide our readers with inspiration, bright ideas, and pride in Mississippi's students and educators.

As we embark on this new venture, what better place to start than with the bedrock structure that underpins so much of what we as educators do? That's why we decided to put a focus on the Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards with a package of stories that lend insight into how the standards were created (p. 24) and what they look like in practice when they reach the classroom (p. 20). We also hear from Jennifer Valentine, a seventh-grade English language arts teacher, who shares her thoughts on the standards and describes what it was like to serve on the standards-revision committee (p. 23).

As we all know, technology is an indispensable part of our daily lives, and the exciting new Computer Science for Mississippi pilot program aims to equip Mississippi students with the skills they need to pursue careers in this expanding field (p. 6). Technology is also reaching into our schools in other ways, as teachers in pilot districts work with data coaches and learn to use student-performance data to drive classroom instruction (p. 14).

Finally, features scattered throughout the issue place a spotlight on extraordinary students and educators, such as an inspiring third-grade cancer survivor (p. 28) and a high school teacher who strives to make her course relevant for her students (p. 29). Our Top 3 list (p. 11) gives educators practical ideas for getting their students talking and writing in every class, every day, and the Inside my Desk feature (p. 30) answers that age-old question: What on earth does my teacher keep in all those desk drawers?

As the new school year begins, it is my hope that *School Focus* reminds you that Mississippi's students, educators, and schools are capable of great things!



Kim S. Benton, EdD

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*All photos submitted by their respective districts unless otherwise noted.*

## ON THE COVER



Pranay Yerra (center) participates in a coding workshop at Highland Elementary School in Ridgeland.

Photo by Sissy Lynn.

## TWO MISSISSIPPI STUDENTS EARN PRESIDENTIAL SCHOLARS HONOR



Emma Knight

Two Mississippi high school seniors were named 2016 Presidential Scholars in recognition of their outstanding scholarship and service. Nathaniel Barlow, a senior at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science in Columbus, and Emma Knight, a senior at Corinth High School in Corinth, were among 160 students nationwide to earn the Presidential Scholar designation. Winners were selected on the basis of their accomplishments in areas including academic success, leadership, and community involvement. Both students traveled to Washington, DC in June to attend a White House-sponsored ceremony to honor the 2016 class of Presidential Scholars.



Nathaniel Barlow

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## U.S. AND MISSISSIPPI DEPARTMENTS OF EDUCATION HOST EDUCATOR EQUITY LAB

In March 2016, Jackson State University played host to the first Educator Equity Lab, cosponsored by the U.S. and Mississippi Departments of Education and Partners for Each and Every Child. The Mississippi event kicked off a series of similar events that will be held across the nation, each aimed at closing equity gaps by ensuring access to excellent educators for all students. Students of color and students from low-income backgrounds are disproportionately taught by inexperienced, unqualified, or out-of-field teachers. In Mississippi, the lowest-performing schools have half as many highly effective teachers as high-performing schools. During the event, educators, community leaders, government officials, and other stakeholders worked together to develop concrete, actionable steps to close equity gaps in Mississippi's public schools to ensure all children have the resources they need to excel.



*Students receive an introduction to coding at the Hour of Code event at the Apple Store in Ridgeland.*



# Workforce Needs, Parent Advocacy Spark **Computer Science Initiative**

## 38 Districts Commit to CS4MS Pilot Program

Alexis Nordin

Photos by Andy Royes

One of the most challenging responsibilities of parenting is facilitating experiences that will shape a child's future. Parents diligently watch over their children doing homework at the kitchen table and wonder whether the worksheets and math problems will be enough to spark intellectual passion. And they equip their children with books, electronic devices, and even television programs designed to educate and inspire. Through it all, parents often ask themselves, "Am I providing the best experiences to maximize my child's potential?"

That question lies at the heart of Mississippi's effort to pilot a new computer science (CS) curriculum: Computer Science for Mississippi (CS4MS). The result of countless hours of work by a partnership of CS advocates throughout the state,

CS4MS will make its debut in 38 Mississippi school districts during the 2016-2017 school year.

### The Case for Computer Science

As a college student at Purdue University, Randy Lynn had an interest in computers and software. In 2013, Lynn, now a father of two and a partner at Jackson's Maris, West & Baker Advertising, saw a Code.org video on Facebook about the importance of exposing children to coding. The video galvanized him.

Code.org uses digital platforms like Facebook and YouTube to generate grassroots interest in CS. Code.org points out that, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), the US will have almost 550,000 new computing jobs by 2024, yet the field faces a critical shortage of qualified workers. In addition, students studying and working in computing professions in the US are primarily white men, with women and students of color worryingly



underrepresented, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) and the BLS.

A 2015 Gallup poll showed that 90% of U.S. parents want CS courses taught in schools, yet only a quarter of administrators reported that their schools offer such courses. In Mississippi, only 153 students graduated from college with four-year CS degrees in 2014, and only two high schools offered the Advanced Placement CS course, according to NCES and College Board data available on Code.org's website.



Mississippi's neighbor Arkansas has taken the lead in bringing CS to classrooms, passing sweeping legislation requiring public and charter high schools to teach CS, thanks to a new governor who campaigned on the issue. In addition to Arkansas, states like Texas, Washington, and South Carolina are also implementing their own CS initiatives.

"I wanted my kids—who are now nine and 11—to have the same opportunities as students in other states," said Lynn. "Since my kids' school didn't offer any programming classes, I decided to try to teach them how to code myself. The more I got into it, the more I came to believe that CS is something that all Mississippi students should learn."

The Lynn family's enthusiasm quickly won over teachers and administrators at Ridgeland's Highland Elementary, and Lynn

recruited Maris, West & Baker's vice president of brand planning and development, Tim Mask, to join the cause. Together, they cofounded Kids Code Mississippi in 2014 with the backing of Maris, West & Baker, the Mississippi Institutions of Higher Learning (IHL), and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). By 2015, the MDE had developed the CS4MS pilot and started recruiting districts to participate.

### "Foundational Learning"

Before recruiting districts for the pilot, the MDE first outlined which topics and concepts the CS4MS pilot would cover. CS4MS includes basic CS elements like keyboarding and Microsoft software like Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, but the program offers much more and is designed to comprehensively provide exposure to all areas of CS. While basic computer skills are important to master, and are reinforced throughout CS4MS, the

pilot's hands-on courses emphasize concepts like how apps, games, and programs are designed and developed, as well as the artistry and problem-solving goals behind them. CS4MS will also introduce students to user experience, data, networks, cyber security, hardware, and many other CS elements.

"In K-12, CS should be about teaching students to use computer technology to 'engineer' new ideas and come up with unique solutions," explained Lynn. "It's a foundational type of learning that teaches logic, critical thinking, sequential thinking, problem-solving, and creativity."

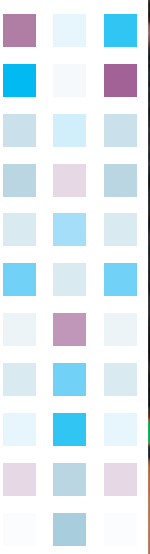
To help design and implement the pilot, the MDE sought the assistance of Mississippi State University's Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU). Shelly Hollis and Kenny Langley, both project managers at the RCU, were tapped to lead the pilot. Hollis has a CS degree and experience managing



*During Ridgeland's Hour of Code event, students participated in hands-on activities and heard from guest speakers.*







*A spectator seizes a photo op of two students participating in coding activities with Governor Phil Bryant at the Hour of Code event.*

school databases, whereas Langley (a self-described “techie”) was chosen for his background in education and his experience designing professional development for STEM educators.

To aid in CS4MS development, Hollis and Langley formed a steering committee including K-12 administrators, teachers, and IT personnel; IHL representatives; and industry advisors from Maris, West & Baker, C-Spire, FNC, Inc. (a mortgage-software company in Oxford), and the U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center in Vicksburg.

CS4MS includes three components, two of which roll out in the 2016-2017 school year. In the elementary-school component, districts will implement 20-40 hours of CS Fundamentals, courses designed by Code.org so that children as young as four can code their own interactive games and stories. The elementary school component also includes keyboarding, digital literacy, and robotics. The high school component is a year-long course that follows the Exploring

CS curriculum developed by the University of California, Los Angeles. The course involves six units: human-computer interaction, problem solving, web design, programming, computing and data analysis, and robotics.

Algebra I is a prerequisite or corequisite course for the high school component. Hollis and Langley noted that requiring Algebra I was highly recommended by the Exploring CS developers. “The sort of logical thinking [students are exposed to in algebra] flows right into the design of most computer programs,” explained Hollis.

Districts have flexibility in how they implement the CS4MS components, and they are able to decide to what extent CS4MS will be offered, whether in one school or all schools. Most districts are targeting fourth or fifth grade for the elementary component and ninth grade for the high school component in the first year.

In the second year of the pilot, districts will select an adjoining

grade for program expansion, and the middle school component, targeting sixth grade, will begin. For example, a school that implements CS in fifth grade would be expected to expand its CS offerings to include fourth grade in 2017-2018, along with sixth grade.

Districts that participate in CS4MS must commit to the program for at least three years. They also must participate in professional development and data-gathering activities and provide sufficient computers and bandwidth to support the courses. In return, the MDE provides schools with all curriculum and resource materials, professional development, and assistance with implementation.

### **CS4MS a “No-Brainer”**

After initially pitching the idea for CS4MS to district superintendents in January 2016, Hollis and Langley waited anxiously for their responses. They feared the pilot might get lost among districts’ competing priorities. “Principals and administrators are not

“Mark Zuckerberg created Facebook on a laptop in his dorm room at Harvard.

## Could the next Mark Zuckerberg be a Mississippian?

With the right educational opportunities, I believe it could happen here.”

— Randy Lynn, co-founder,  
Kids Code Mississippi

necessarily opposed [to implementing CS courses],” explained Hollis. “It’s just that they’re already short on resources, so they have to figure out how to make it work.”

However, the CS4MS pilot met with immediate enthusiasm from districts, with interest far surpassing the minimum of 12 districts Hollis and Langley had hoped to recruit. Within a few months, 38 districts had committed to piloting the program starting in August 2016. The response is evidence of a paradigm shift across the state, Hollis and Langley believe.

“In general, I think people are hungry for [CS],” said Langley. “Communities, parents, and students have heard about the need, and they want these opportunities.”

Rankin County and Lowndes County were among the first school districts to voice their support.

Rankin County’s superintendent, Sue Townsend, pledged “wall-to-wall implementation” of CS4MS in all of her schools. Alice Rainwater, assistant principal at Northwest Rankin Middle School and a CS4MS steering committee member, is eager for the middle school component to roll out in 2017-2018.


“The decision for Northwest Rankin Middle School to sign on for the CS4MS pilot was a real no-brainer for us after hearing the job growth projections for careers in the CS field,” said Rainwater. “We knew that we needed to introduce our students to CS skills and content so that their interest can be piqued in middle school, and they can enter an engineering or CS pathway in high school.”

For Lowndes County, the choice was also clear. Robin Ballard is the district’s assistant superintendent of curriculum and instruction. “I felt that our district was a perfect fit for the pilot, and we are thrilled to be part of laying the foundation,” said Ballard. “Our local industry has had such tremendous growth in the past few years, and our district wants to be a good steward of keeping their workforce competent and vital. We believe this new curriculum is a key component to that end.”

Although having so many districts apply to participate in the pilot was a big surprise, the MDE agreed that if districts were able to allocate the necessary resources and meet technology capacity requirements, they would be accepted to join CS4MS.

“It is economically important for Mississippi to implement a K-12 CS curriculum,” noted Jean Massey, associate state superintendent of education. “The CS area has the largest projected growth for employment, not just in Mississippi, but across the country, and it is vital for Mississippi’s economy.”

Lynn wholeheartedly agrees that CS4MS could be a game changer for Mississippians. “CS education has the potential to be a tremendous economic-development resource for our state,” Lynn said. “Our state has always had a high rate of entrepreneurship, just typically not the kind of entrepreneurship that creates lots of high-wage jobs. Instead, we often rely on recruiting large manufacturers to provide good jobs. That approach can be challenging in rural communities. The great thing about computing is that you can start up a software company in your bedroom or garage if you have the knowledge and skills.”

For more information about CS4MS, please contact Shelly Hollis at [shelly.hollis@rcu.msstate.edu](mailto:shelly.hollis@rcu.msstate.edu) or Kenny Langley at [kenny.langley@rcu.msstate.edu](mailto:kenny.langley@rcu.msstate.edu). 



# TOP 3 REASONS TO GET STUDENTS *Talking and Writing*

Roslyn Miller

**L**istening and reading teaches you what others think. Speaking and writing teaches you what you think. Despite the benefits of having students stop to reflect and put their thoughts into words, all too often students spend

most of their class time passively listening to lectures and reading textbooks or worksheets.

In many classes, especially those that are more technical in nature, students may spend very little time organizing and explaining their thoughts by speaking and writing. However, learning to communicate

effectively is as valuable in mathematics and technical classes as it is in language and social studies. To become truly college- or career-ready, students must develop strong speaking and writing skills.

Here are three reasons why getting students talking and writing in class are worth the time and effort:

## 1

**Talking and writing = thinking and learning.** Getting students to think deeply is one of the most challenging goals for any teacher. Talking and writing often prompts students to think more deeply than they do when they're simply passive recipients of information through listening or reading. Wondering how to get conversation started? Think-pair-shares with prompts that invite multiple acceptable responses develop self-confidence and creativity. Alternatively, a brief writing prompt in the last few minutes of class gets students to reflect and explain their thoughts, reinforcing their recall and understanding of the lesson.



## 2

**Talking and writing develop communication skills.** Strong communication skills are essential for both college and career success and advancement. Jobs in every career field require workers to communicate their ideas, the status of their projects, or results of their work to customers or colleagues both orally and in writing. Students who have more practice speaking and writing in their content area are better prepared for their career or advanced study.

## 3

**Talking and writing provide authentic and accurate information for assessment.** Talking and writing enable students to communicate what they are thinking, providing teachers with real-time information about students' depth of understanding and any misconceptions that need to be corrected. Correct answers on a test are an indicator of recall, but having students write or talk about what they have learned offers more detailed information about what they actually know and how well they know it.



# 2016 MISSISSIPPI TEACHER OF THE YEAR GOES ABOVE AND BEYOND FOR STUDENTS



Jodi McKenzie

Photo by Andy Royes

Jodi McKenzie, a 10th-grade English teacher at Gautier High School, is the 2016 Mississippi Teacher of the Year. McKenzie, who teaches in the Pascagoula-Gautier School District, was chosen after an intensive process that included nominations from every district in the state. McKenzie has been teaching for 12 years, and her passion is helping students realize their dreams. At Gautier High School, she serves as chair of the English Department, sponsors the Student Council, and is a member of the Building Leadership Team, among other roles. She teaches all state-tested English classes at her high school and supports retesters to help ensure their success on the test. One cause that's close to her heart is Excel by 5, which helps teen mothers prepare for the journey of motherhood. As Mississippi's Teacher of the Year, McKenzie will represent the state in the National Teacher of the Year competition, and she will travel to Washington, D.C. to participate in a Rose Garden recognition ceremony at the White House.

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# 2016 MISSISSIPPI ADMINISTRATOR OF THE YEAR INSPIRES EXCELLENCE



Corlis Curry

Photo by Andy Royes

Corlis Curry, principal of Lawhon Elementary School in the Tupelo Public School District, was named the 2016 Mississippi Administrator of the Year. Curry was selected from nominees across the state after a rigorous selection process, and she will share her expertise with other Mississippi educators during the upcoming year through presentations and professional development. In her extensive teaching career, Curry has taught fifth grade in Lee County Schools, seventh grade in the Nettleton School District, and English at Tupelo High School. She also served in leadership roles in the Amory School District prior to joining Lawhon Elementary, where she has been principal since 2012. In her time at Lawhon, Curry is credited with introducing significant instructional improvements, including professional learning communities, the Targeted Accelerated Growth Program, and arts integration. She encourages her teachers to focus on student-centered instruction, with an emphasis on student achievement, all the while keeping the motto "No Exceptions and No Excuses" at the forefront.



# 2016 MISSISSIPPI PARENT OF THE YEAR FOSTERS SCHOOL, COMMUNITY TIES

A mother of two children in the Greenwood Public School District was named the 2016 Mississippi Parent of the Year. Lora Rance Evans, who serves as president of Greenwood Middle School's Parent Teacher Student Organization, is passionate about connecting local parents with faculty and staff at Greenwood's schools. Among her many efforts, she has served as a school board member and coordinated ACT and financial aid workshops. She is also a founding member of the local Parents for Public Schools of Greenwood chapter. Evans received the honor in recognition of her innovative, solution-oriented personality and was selected from among nominations from every school district in Mississippi.



Left to right: Chairman of the Mississippi State Board of Education John R. Kelly, Lora Rance Evans, and Mississippi State Superintendent of Education Carey Wright

Photo by Andy Royes

Perfect your craft.

Check [trumba.com/calendars/MDE](http://trumba.com/calendars/MDE) for upcoming training opportunities



Students at Lyon Elementary participate in activities chosen to specifically address needs indicated by the data their teachers have learned to analyze through the DCP.





# MORE THAN JUST *Numbers*

Data-coaching program helps schools make meaningful change

Kristen Dechert

“Numbers can give meaningful information,” said third-grade Lyon Elementary teacher Mary Carter, but “being able to read more than the numbers in data is very important.”

In 2014, the Mississippi Legislature established SB 2572, which created a pilot program to focus on intensive data coaching at schools in lower-performing districts. The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) developed the Data Coaching Pilot Program (DCPP) in partnership with Amplify, a K-12 service provider, with the hope that school-embedded data coaches could help spark a rapid and substantial improvement in student achievement.

“Oftentimes schools have data but do not use it to drive instructional or system change—it is just there,” said Nathan Oakley, executive director of elementary education and reading at the MDE. “The unique piece of this pilot is that it is building educators’ capacity to have difficult

and meaningful conversations, thus changing the culture in schools.”

Through a competitive application process, the MDE selected seven schools across five districts to participate in the pilot and embedded Amplify data coaches in all participating schools. Across the seven schools, 150 educators receive the targeted support of the data coaches, impacting about 2,500 students.

Data coaches in all seven schools work with educators toward the same three objectives, said Julia Gonzales, executive director of government relations at Amplify: (1) to develop technical skills to interpret data, (2) to build pedagogical skills to differentiate instruction, and (3) to foster greater collaboration among educators.

As one of these data coaches, Lynn Owens works with two Coahoma County schools, Lyon Elementary and

## Objectives of Amplify's Data-Coaching Services:



Develop technical skills to interpret data



Build pedagogical skills to differentiate instruction



Foster greater collaboration among educators

Coahoma Agricultural High School. Owens said that her main goal is to help educators look strategically at their data.

“Even though some of the schools may have already been looking at their data, they didn’t have a framework for organizing and analyzing it,” said Owens. “When you use a framework and can strategize together, data conversations are always ongoing.”

Owens said her approach is the same for all schools: developing and building teacher capacity through professional learning communities. “When teachers come together and work in collaborative structures and transfer that information to the classroom, you see big success.”

One of Lyon Elementary’s goals for the 2014-2015 school year was for all third-graders to pass the reading gate, thus demonstrating they were reading on grade level. As Owens noted, “that was a huge goal” and one that everyone at the school is very proud to have met.

Lyon said, “After introducing the Amplify framework, it was really all about getting teachers to ask, ‘When I analyze data, what do I do next?’ Even though [Lyon teachers] were already [analyzing data] to some extent, there wasn’t an organized commitment. So we put in place an organized approach: you analyze, you strategize, you take action.”

But what does that look like in action? Owens explained that Lyon Elementary students take assessments every Friday and that teachers bring the results to their professional learning communities the following week. In these meetings,

7 schools  
in 5 districts  
participated  
in the data-coaching  
pilot program

150  
educators  
received training, affecting  
2,500  
students

“teachers look for patterns and trends in the data,” first at the classroom level and then at the student level. Then they discuss how to provide targeted support to students who are underperforming in a given area.

Nearby Coahoma Agricultural High School follows a similar model as it works toward a goal of increasing the average ACT score for students. At Coahoma, teachers provide targeted in-class instruction and the school offers after-school tutoring and support from skill-specific consultants to help students improve their knowledge and skills. Owens happily reported “they are well on their way to achieving their ACT goal.”

When asked what is making the

difference, Owens was quick to credit both schools for involving students in data conversations. For Owens, a process that involves students is one that empowers students and gives them a sense of agency over their own progress.

“As educators, we sit around long tables and talk about data together,” she said, “but at the end of the day, when we have these conversations with students and set data goals with students, that’s when it becomes impactful and powerful.”

“Parental communication is also more strategic,” added Owens. “Before the third-grade gate last year, Lyon [Elementary] had a parent meeting early in the year to discuss what would be done in the classroom, what supports were available to students, and what could be done at home to prepare as well.”

If Carter’s experience is any indication, teachers are responding well to the intensive coaching. “Having a data coach has helped me keep track of student data and better understand its relationship to student outcomes,” she said.

Lyon Elementary Principal Crystal Hall-Gooden concurred about the importance of using data strategically. Rather than setting goals based simply on improvement from year to year, she now encourages teachers to set individual student goals based on individual student needs and academic performance. Hall-Gooden said this practice benefits students because it personalizes instruction and assessment strategies.

One of the most meaningful changes Hall-Gooden has seen in her



Data collected from classroom activities at Lyon Elementary are used by teachers to inform instruction.



school since beginning the DCPD is an improvement in what happens after data analysis. “Our teachers have been looking at data for a while, but now the follow-up has improved... My teachers are actually going in and altering instruction and strategies based on what the data has shown.”

It’s too early to fully understand the impact of the DCPD, but feedback seems overwhelmingly positive so far. Of those who completed a program survey administered by Amplify, 76% said the DCPD has improved data practices at their schools, and 80% said the program has helped educators in their schools learn to use data to revise lesson plans and improve instruction.

“I’ve learned a lot from the project,” said Hall-Gooden, “and the teachers have learned a lot as well. Everyone has grown.”

Originally, the three-year pilot would have ended after the 2016-2017 school year; however, changes

made during the 2016 legislative session allow for continuance and expansion. With SB 2388, the pilot designation has been removed, and the program will now be available to pre-K participation as well. In the original pilot, a university-level course on data interpretation and use for preservice teachers was planned for implementation at the University of Mississippi in fall 2016. The amended language in SB 2388 now opens the course up to any institution of higher learning, potentially broadening access for preservice teachers dramatically. With these changes, the sustainability of the program looks promising.

“Our goal is for these schools to improve so much we work ourselves out of a job,” said Gonzales.

Only time will tell, but until then, the DCPD schools continue to analyze their data, improve their instruction, and celebrate their students’ accomplishments. <sup>sf</sup>

# 76%

of educators surveyed said the program has improved data practices at their schools

# 80%

said the program has helped educators learn to use data to improve instruction

# MISSISSIPPI AWARDED NEW SKILLS FOR YOUTH GRANT TO IMPROVE CAREER PREPARATION SYSTEMS FOR STUDENTS

Mississippi is one of 24 states awarded a grant by JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s New Skills for Youth Initiative to develop an action plan to improve its career-readiness systems. The grant supports states as they work to align career-focused education with high-skill, high-demand jobs. Mississippi will receive \$100,000 for six months to complete phase one of the New Skills for Youth initiative, which involves performing a diagnostic assessment of the state's career preparation systems and crafting a new action plan. After completing phase one in fall 2016, Mississippi will be eligible to apply for phase two of the grant competition, in which 10 states will receive up to \$2 million each to execute the plans developed during phase one.



## TWO MISSISSIPPI STUDENTS RECOGNIZED FOR COMMITMENT TO COMMUNITY SERVICE

In February 2016, two Mississippi students were recognized with Prudential Spirit of Community Awards, given annually to the top youth volunteers in each state. Lindsey Meyer of Pass Christian High School organized a “sensory friendly” movie screening at a local theater for individuals with autism and other special needs. Her passion for this project was sparked by her experience as a counselor at a camp for children with special needs. Jameshia Attaway, a sixth grader at Carver Elementary School in Indianola, was also a winner. Several years ago after witnessing a fellow student being teased for wearing shoes with holes in them, Jameshia was determined to lend a hand. She responded by planning a birthday party where she collected gifts and clothing for children in need, a tradition she continues to this day. In recognition of their outstanding dedication to bettering their communities, both students received a financial award and a trip to Washington, D.C.



*Top: Lindsey Meyer is recognized with the Prudential Spirit of Community Award for her community service activities.*

*Bottom: Jameshia Attaway displays the medal she received as part of the Prudential Spirit of Community Awards.*



# FINE-TUNING THE STATE STANDARDS

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*Participating in the State Standards revision process*

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*Revising the Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards*

# BRINGING THE *State Standards* TO LIFE

## Shift to Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards Prompts Classroom Changes

Anne Hierholzer

**O**n paper, the Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS), which cover math and English language arts (ELA) for Mississippi's K-12 students, look fairly straightforward. But what happens when teachers are handed these standards and asked to bring them to life in their classrooms?

Initially adopted in August 2010, the MCCRS place a strong emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving. Rather than simply concentrating on getting students to complete high school, the MCCRS shift the focus to ensuring students graduate well-prepared for college and careers.

### Laying the Groundwork

The MCCRS empower schools and districts to select the texts and curricula they will use to teach the standards, so educators play a big role in determining how the standards are translated to the classroom. In many districts, teachers worked together

to create new curricula tailored specifically to the needs of students in their district, rather than relying on textbooks.

"Textbooks tend to be too straightforward; they give students step-by-step instructions that require very little thought," said Jackie Miller, a seventh-grade math teacher in the Petal School District. "Math teachers at our school collaborate daily to create our own classroom materials that push our students to develop their problem-solving skills through hands-on activities. We also work together often to revise our classroom activities to address common student misconceptions."

Across the board, educators agree that the introduction of the MCCRS has fostered stronger collaboration among educators.

"The new standards have increased collegiality hundred-fold at our schools," said Stephanie Brewer, assistant superintendent in the Petal School District. "Our professional learning communities meet every day at each grade level to allow teachers

to plan and create together. Our teachers now rely on one another."

### "Sage on the Stage" No More

For many educators, the transition from Mississippi's previous standards to the MCCRS was challenging, requiring them to rethink their approach to teaching.

"I had to learn how to create activities and assessments that sparked higher-level thinking," said Vivian Stewart, a second-grade ELA teacher in the Hollandale School District. "I focus now on providing more small-group and one-on-one interactions. I want my students to be engaged in student-centered activities that let them be in charge of their own learning."

From an administrative perspective, the student-centered approach to teaching is a welcome development. Brewer has observed this change in her district firsthand: "Teachers have now become facilitators. Our classrooms are now less teacher-centered, and this can be difficult to adjust to if you're used to





being the ‘sage on the stage.’”

As part of this approach, teachers have learned to think twice before providing students with answers to their questions.

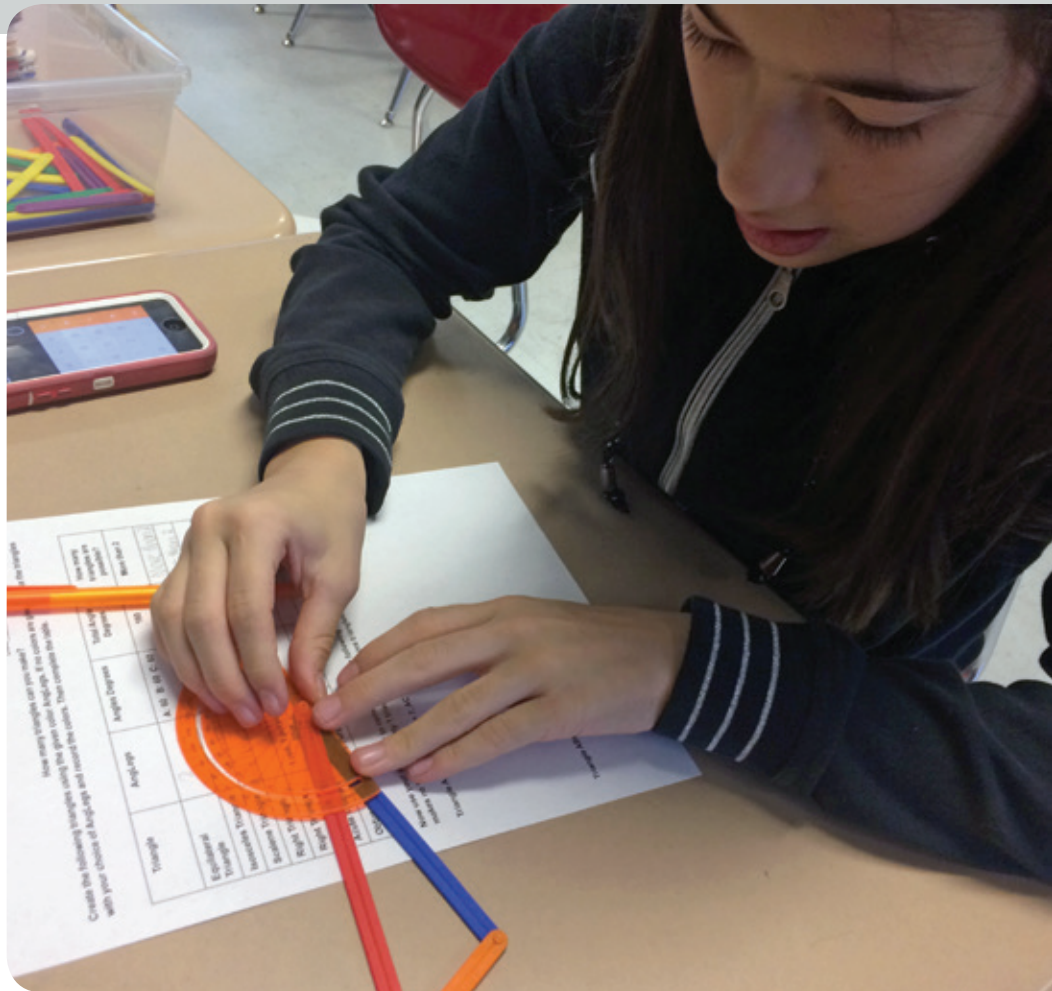
“Students used to think that if they didn’t understand something immediately, their teacher would show them how to do it over and over again until they got it,” said Miller. “Now we operate under the premise that our main job is to facilitate growth through challenges. Sometimes when we as teachers are too quick to provide information, we steal that ‘a-ha’ moment from our students.”

### Going Deep with Curriculum

In addition to asking teachers to rethink their classroom approach, the MCCRS set new benchmarks for what students needed to learn in each grade level in two subject areas: ELA and math. In ELA, the MCCRS put a new focus on nonfiction and require students to practice using evidence from texts to support ideas. The shift to include more nonfiction is appreciated by teachers who recognize the large role it plays in students’ everyday lives.

“I appreciate the balance between fiction and nonfiction emphasized by the state standards,” said Pam Gunkel, who teaches ELA at Gulfport High School. “Both are so important for students’ development. They need to know how to read a variety of texts, and this includes nonfiction items like instruction manuals and news articles.”

In math, the MCCRS asks teachers to teach in greater depth on fewer



*One of Miller's seventh-grade students at Petal Middle School develops her problem-solving skills during math class.*

topics. Math students also learn to apply math to real-world situations and to truly understand how math works, rather than simply memorizing formulas.

“For me, the biggest difference in the new standards is that, previously, we had lots of ground to cover, and we had to go a mile wide and an inch deep,” said Patches Calhoun, a fourth-grade math teacher in the Oxford School District. “Now, it’s very focused, which is so much better than focusing on lots of things and students not fully grasping them. We have time now to focus not just on what is the right answer, but why something is the right answer.”

At the high school level, Gulfport High School teacher Scott Wedgeworth agrees students are gaining a stronger grasp of the concepts they’re learning.

“Under the new standards, students must show a deeper understanding of how solutions are obtained and what the meaning of a solution is,” said Wedgeworth. “I feel that this has a huge positive impact on the depth of my students’ knowledge.”

### Reaping the Benefits

For students, the greater rigor required by the MCCRS can seem daunting, but teachers are committed to guiding their students through the process of deeper learning.

“At the beginning of the year, it takes lots of work to get students on board,” said Calhoun. “I have to train students how to have math conversations and how to persevere. Many students are used to getting quick answers, and when it doesn’t come quickly, they want to give up. But by the end of the year, I’ll see the whole class rising to the occasion.”

Although adapting to new learning methods can be challenging for students, many educators agree that their students are reaping significant benefits from the MCCRS-inspired approach.

“The standards give students more opportunities to demonstrate what they know,” said Gunkel. “My students learn how to communicate with others in a variety of forms, including speeches, group activities, and interviews. The skill of knowing how to communicate effectively with others really comes to the forefront.”

Wedgeworth points out that teamwork skills are also on the rise among his students: “In class, there are many group assignments and activities that challenge students to work together. This [teamwork] is the one 21st-century skill that needs to be addressed more than any other. Businesses and industry are begging for workers that can carry out team-oriented tasks. For students to master this, they must try and even possibly fail in order to work through the challenges of teamwork.”

According to Calhoun, students are also learning important lessons about confidence and how to deal

with setbacks: “My students learn that coming up with a wrong answer is okay. It’s a learning experience; we just break it down and figure out what went wrong. I really see students’ attitudes change. I want them to love math, not be afraid of it. I used to get kids in my class all the time who said they weren’t good at math. Now, it’s very seldom that by the end of the year every kid isn’t excited about what they’re doing.”

### Earning Community Support

Parents and the wider community were understandably hesitant when confronted with new learning standards. During the MCCRS rollout, a key challenge for teachers and school leaders was helping parents adjust to the new learning approaches.

“During the transition to the new standards, we did hear from concerned parents,” explained Calhoun. “We worked together as a grade level and as a school to educate parents and be very transparent. We tried to get lots of information out to get everyone on the same page. Now, our parents are very much on board with what we’re doing.”

Once parents began to see positive changes in their students’ knowledge and abilities, they were won over to the promise and potential of the MCCRS.

“As parents began to see the fruits of these standards, more and more of them were actually quite impressed,” said Brewer. “Many of them can’t believe the level of thinking they see in their kids. I’ve had parents tell me

their sixth graders are reading and thinking at a level parents themselves didn’t reach until high school!”

### Stronger Standards, Deeper Learning


As the MCCRS increase rigor across the board, teachers believe their students are fully capable of rising to the challenge.

“[The MCCRS] allow students to set goals for themselves that are attainable,” said Georgina Oatis, who teaches middle-school ELA in the Hollandale School District. “Students are able to see the areas they are deficient in, and they can transfer what they’re learning across the curriculum.”

Teachers themselves also appreciate the increased rigor the MCCRS represent.

“I think that now, if you asked teachers to go back to the old standards, they wouldn’t,” said Brewer. “We believe the rigor of the new standards has benefitted students. Teachers are excited about the deep understanding their students are gaining; in fact, many of us wish we’d been taught this way when we were kids.”

Miller agrees that the new standards represent a step forward for Mississippi.

“At first, the new standards seemed difficult and complicated, but as we’ve worked with them more, we’ve come to understand that they’re really just about good teaching,” said Miller. “While it was overwhelming at first, now I wouldn’t go back to the old standards for anything.” 





## IN MY OWN WORDS

# Participating in the State Standards Revision Process



*Jennifer Valentine  
Seventh-Grade ELA Teacher,  
South Jones High School*

As educational trends come and go, it is important for educators to stay abreast of how they can provide the best education possible for our students. It is vital that Mississippi students are given every opportunity to receive the best education teachers can provide to them. The Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS) provide students with a rigorous education no matter where in the state they live, making them more competitive with students across the nation. These standards recently went through a lengthy review process to make sure they specifically fit the needs of our Mississippi children.

During this process, I served on the standards review committee that reviewed public feedback and adapted the MCCRS to fit the needs of Mississippi's students. I represented sixth through eighth grade English Language Arts (ELA), along with about seven other educators and community members. Our team combed through every objective, handling every step of the process with credibility and transparency. We discussed objectives and standards that had a public comment and/or a suggested change from the online public forum. We had thorough and lengthy discussions about every comment and seriously considered all the suggested changes. As we discussed, we focused on whether the suggested change would make our state curriculum frameworks more effective, and we also took into account whether or not the suggested change would compromise the true meaning of the standard.

While going through this process, I imagined the faces of my students and the education they would receive as the end result of this process. Throughout the two-day process, much research and discussion produced a few changes to the ELA

standards for sixth through eighth grade. We listened to each group present the changes proposed from the public forum and decided as a group whether to propose those changes. It was important to discuss why a standard was or was not changed based on public suggestions. After the standards were discussed and vetted, they were then presented to the State Board of Education for final approval, and then shared with the public in another forum allowing Mississippians to view and comment on the recommended changes.

We want our state's education system to be rigorous and competitive with those of other states. It's important to push our students to reach their highest potential and offer them all they need to be successful and productive as literate adults. They deserve the same opportunities as students of other states; therefore, they need rigorous standards. I am grateful to have been a part of this process. As an educator, I am the voice for my students, as well as teachers across the state. I believe the new MCCRS will produce positive, profound effects for Mississippi's students for years to come.

# FROM **GOOD** TO **GREAT**

## Revising the Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards

*Kristen Dechert*

No one ever said the process would be easy.

“We addressed every comment on every standard,” said Petal High School English teacher Lisa McDonald, one of the dozens of educators who donated hours of their time to crafting revisions to the Mississippi College- and Career-Ready Standards (MCCRS).

In 2015, 60 individuals across the state of Mississippi took on the daunting task of reviewing the MCCRS as volunteers on the standards-review committee. Made up of 40 teachers, five administrators, six postsecondary faculty members, two parents, and seven English language arts and mathematics specialists, the committee participated in several days of intensive review over the course of three months.

### Revision Process

From June through September 2015, the Mississippi Department of

Education (MDE) conducted an online public forum on the state’s English language arts (ELA) and mathematics standards, collectively known as the MCCRS. During this 90-day window, nearly 1,400 Mississippians submitted over 8,500 comments to the forum website.

After gathering public feedback, the standards review committee divided into four groups: elementary ELA, elementary mathematics, secondary ELA, and secondary mathematics. Each group was charged with reviewing comments and standards in its area to determine if change was needed and, if so, what that change should be. Once the smaller groups determined their suggested revisions, the larger committee reconvened and discussed the proposed changes together. When consensus was reached, the changes were proposed to the Mississippi Board of Education in late 2015. Following a 30-day window for public comment, the

board approved the changes in January 2016. The revised MCCRS will be implemented in the 2016-2017 school year.

“Each suggestion made for an excellent discussion of the standards themselves as well as how we could best state those standards and communicate them to teachers,” said Heather Ramage, curriculum specialist for Pascagoula-Gautier School District.

Inviting public comment opens the door to honest feedback, both good and bad. Several committee members noted their anticipation of negative comments about the standards. However, what they found was quite the opposite.

“The vast majority of comments were supportive of the standards,” said Christine Davidson, who teaches eighth-grade English at Northwest Rankin Middle School in Rankin County. “There really weren’t many negative comments at all.”

## STANDARDS REVISION PROCESS

- 1 GATHER** public feedback
- 2 Committee DIVIDES** into 4 groups:
  - Elementary ELA
  - Elementary Math
  - Secondary ELA
  - Secondary Math
- 3 Each group REVIEWS** comments & standards to determine what changes are needed
- 4 Large committee RECONVENES** & discusses proposed changes together





According to Donna Diaz, a mathematics coach in Biloxi Public School District, the standards-review committee members had three main charges: Ensure the MCCRS were (1) aligned to critical content for the assigned grade level, (2) developmentally appropriate for the assigned grade level, and (3) clearly and accurately phrased.

Diaz said the committee identified a few concepts that were missing from the MCCRS, which were then incorporated into the standards. Overall, though, committee members said most of the changes made to the MCCRS were minimal and focused on clarifying phrasing or moving a standard to a different grade level, reflective of the mostly positive feedback from public comments.

"I applaud the hard work by this standards review committee," said State Superintendent of Education, Carey Wright. "They were thoughtful and deliberate about the process, and they provided the MDE with information that will guide our professional development for teachers."

The entire review process was complimented and appreciated by the participating educators, administrators, and community members, and stakeholders at all levels expect to reap big rewards in outcomes for students.

"From start to finish, the process was open and transparent, and MDE officials clearly explained to the team our goals and challenges," Sissy Lynn, 2015 Mississippi Parent of the Year, and standards-review-committee member noted. "My hope is that, with these enhanced standards and with additional professional development, we will see a big improvement in test scores and student achievement in the years to come."

## RECOMMENDED CHANGES

### GRADES K-5

MATH

- Emphasis on fluency standards or full understanding of basic math concepts
- Rewrite standards for clarity
- Include the concept of money when teaching time
- Introduce attributes of circles
- Clarity around the concept of "skip counting"
- Provide examples, diagrams, and suggestions for models
- Include standards related to calendar language

ELA

- Provide a glossary of terms
- Add grade-level standards that address cursive writing, printing, and keyboarding
- Remove references to specific lengths of writing production

### GRADES 6-8

MATH

- Add addition and subtraction of integers
- Split larger, dense standards into smaller, feasible standards
- Remove the concept of "mean absolute deviation"
- Add the concept of "inequalities" to a key Grade 8 standard
- Identify specific measures of center and measures of variability

ELA

- Same as K-5, plus:
- Reword some standards to ensure concepts are built upon at each grade level
- Add terminology to address limiting language and/or common misconceptions

### GRADES 9-12

MATH

- Transition a few standards to higher courses
- Remove rational, cube, and recursive functions from Algebra I
- Move a trigonometric concept from Algebra II to the Advanced Mathematics Plus course and Algebra II
- Re-evaluate the design of the Advanced Mathematics Plus course
- Focus on solving problems using graphical and algebraic methods

ELA

- Provide a glossary of terms
- Reword some standards to ensure concepts are built upon at each grade level
- Add terminology to address limiting language and/or misconceptions

**5** Changes are **PROPOSED** to the State Board of Education

**6** A 30-day window for public **COMMENT** is opened

**7** Board **APPROVES** changes

**8** Revised MCCRS **IMPLEMENTED** in the 2016-2017 school year

## Standards Without Borders

Is defining course content and grade-level expectations too prescriptive for educators who want to try innovative approaches and develop creative lessons for their students? Davidson doesn't think so: "The standards are really the skeleton of what we do in the classroom.... They are meant to define what is taught and at what level but not how the material is taught. Each teacher has a different way of approaching a standard."

Diaz also appreciates having standards that are similar to those from other states. She noted consistency is especially helpful for transient students, something she often encounters living and working on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

"If we're teaching fractions in third grade but the state a student is coming from doesn't teach them until fourth grade, that's a really big problem," explained Diaz. "In terms of grade-level moving, it really helps if we have state standards that are similar to the states around us that children will be coming into our state

from. That helps a lot."


East Mississippi Community College English instructor Ginny Leonard noted similar benefits of common standards. "I have students coming in from every school district in Mississippi and from other states too," said Leonard. "If standards are consistent, you can assume that most likely students have been introduced to the same concepts at the same point in time, which is very important in college when students come from all over to one central place for the next step in their education."

## Impact to Teaching and Learning

McDonald, whose school first implemented the standards in 2010, has seen dramatic improvement in student engagement over the years. "It's no longer you go to English class and you study English, you go to history class and you study history, you go to science class and you study science—this separate list of little things you learn that are only lodged in that subject. This set of standards is applicable to real-world experiences and has brought to life everything

we have [students] read and do in any classroom. Everything is tied to something bigger than just that one text."

Ramage, whose district has also been using the MCCRS for several years, has seen big changes as well: "When we first implemented the standards in 2010, we all had some doubts about whether our students could achieve these expectations. Now, although there are still plenty of struggles, we see our kids tackling texts and grasping big ideas that we would never have used with the curriculum of the past."

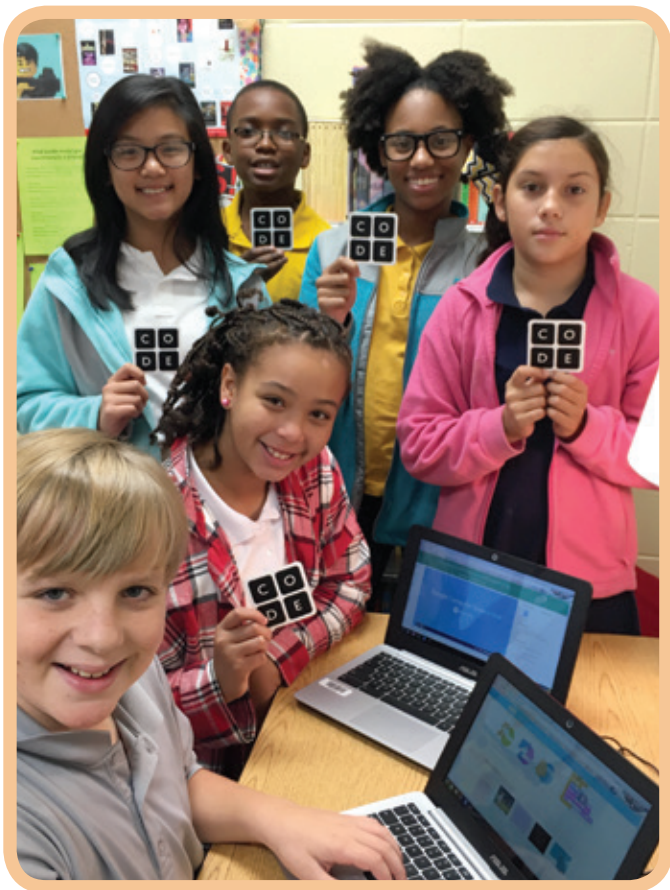
Improvement in collaboration and engagement in high school is important, but do these standards also align to what students need to know for college? Leonard wholeheartedly answered yes: "The state standards certainly prepare students to be successful in my classroom. If students can [meet these standards], they're completely ready for college composition courses, maybe even beyond....They are ready to go straight into a gateway course without remediation." 

"The language of the standards helps us know not just what content to teach but how we want students to approach that content..

***It's less about memorizing and more about understanding."***

- Jennifer Wilson, Rankin County mathematics teacher and curriculum specialist





## LONGLEAF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TAKES HOME CODE.ORG PRIZE

Students at Longleaf Elementary School in the Lamar County School District took home the grand prize of \$10,000 for their participation in the Hour of Code program sponsored by Code.org. Hour of Code is a worldwide initiative aimed at introducing young people to computer science by demystifying computer coding. Participating schools spend an hour of the school day teaching students the basics of coding through a variety of interactive programs. As an incentive for schools to participate, Code.org awarded a \$10,000 prize to one school in each state. The funds will be used to purchase technology equipment for Longleaf Elementary School. Schools interested in participating in Hour of Code can visit [www.code.org](http://www.code.org) for more information.

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## STUDY FINDS MISSISSIPPI'S LITERACY-BASED PROMOTION ACT YIELDS PROMISING RESULTS

A recent review of Mississippi's Literacy-Based Promotion Act by the Southeast Comprehensive Center, an affiliate of the American Institutes for Research, found that implementation has resulted in notable improvements in literacy teaching and learning in Mississippi. The report also points out that although the state has made progress challenges remain, particularly related to assisting struggling readers in grades other than third grade and retaining qualified teachers. In an effort to boost literacy in the state, the MDE established offices for early childhood, reading, and intervention services, all of which provide support and professional development to teachers. In addition, the MDE began a strategic-planning effort and launched the "Strong Readers = Strong Leaders" public-awareness campaign.



# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## What's your favorite thing about school?

My favorite part about school is that my classmates are caring and nice. Whenever I walk into my classroom, everyone smiles and welcomes me. That makes me feel really good. I also like to run and play with my friends at recess. First we start out talking; then we'll decide to play freeze tag. Now, when we first start, not many people are playing, maybe just two or three of us. Then pretty soon about five or six people are playing, and in a few minutes a lot of people are playing. Everybody likes freeze tag, I think.

## Tell us about something you learned today.

Line plots, in math class. Math is my favorite, especially division. I like division better than multiplication, because it's fun. Multiplication has a lot of facts to learn, and I don't know those so great yet, but I can do division. Reading is important too, although I don't like it as much as math. But reading is something I will use throughout the rest of my life. Right now, I'm reading a book called Feed the Cat. It's kind of different, and it tells a story of how a cat named

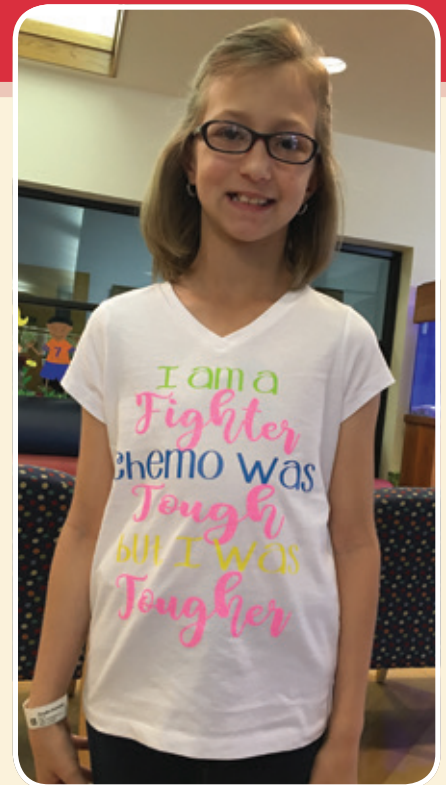
Pete has to learn to make friends with a turtle. I think it would be a really good book to read to kindergarteners because it teaches little kids how to be friendly.

## Tell us about your favorite teacher or school employee. What makes that person special?

I have two. Ms. Havard and Ms. Henderson; they're my idols and very sweet so I look forward to seeing them every day. Ms. Havard is funny and she teaches me lifelong lessons that I will need to know for the rest of my life. Ms. Henderson because she wears pretty clothes and she is sweet. My friend and I like to sing songs for Ms. Havard and make her laugh; a few days ago, she actually videoed us while we were singing. Ms. Havard told me that I sing the same song all the time, and I probably do sing it too much. But I like to sing my favorite.

## What advice do you have for a student in kindergarten who is nervous about starting school?

Don't let people bully you. If you see someone being bullied, you should help them by telling the teacher or



## Kennedy Gunter

- 3rd Grade
- West Lauderdale Elementary School
- Lauderdale County School District

just asking the bully to stop. Nobody likes to be bullied, and people should take up for each other.

“Kennedy was diagnosed with T-cell non-Hodgkins lymphoma at age seven. She is a fighter, she is brave, and she has won the battle against cancer. I have been blessed to have her in my classroom; she's the bravest little girl that I have ever met.”

- Emily Havard, Kennedy's teacher and nominator

# TEACHER SPOTLIGHT



## Brittney Broadwater

- 10th-Grade English teacher
- Hattiesburg High School
- Hattiesburg School District

### Why did you become a teacher?

I had a passion for children—specifically teenagers—and I wanted to put myself in a position to positively influence them. Teenagers really need positive role models who care about them, and I find it fulfilling to serve in that role. I know most adults would agree that kids in younger grades need to be loved and nurtured by their teachers, but teenagers need those things too. When I show my students that I care about them, they really respond positively. I believe you have to reach them to teach them.

### How do you motivate your students?

Getting my students to enjoy reading and develop good comprehension skills is hard. Often, students don't share the passion for reading that I've always had, so I have to demonstrate why reading is satisfying. We all like reading things we can relate to, so I look for texts that are relevant to my students and that touch on difficult things they've

experienced in their own lives. We read and talk about it. When I can find a book that brings discussion to life in my classroom, students are hooked.

### What advice do you have for first-year teachers?

Don't compare your first year to someone else's tenth year. There is no comparison. It's a process for us all. Experience is a good teacher, but you have to have the attitude that you're going to learn from your mistakes. I like the quote, "Comparison is the thief of joy." Instead of mimicking someone else's style, be yourself and let your personality shine through. Students will recognize your authenticity.

I would also encourage teachers to only remain in the profession if they are passionate about it. My passion drives me, and it has driven me even on the days I felt overwhelmed and incapable. Our students need passion, and they react to it. Through all the late nights, frustrations, and discomfort, hold on to your passion.

“Not only is Brittney a teacher with a full load, she is the lead teacher for our Arts & Humanities Academy and the building-level teacher-leader for our new teacher orientation program. She is a true professional who is dedicated to students and the school.”

- Jermaine Brown, principal, Hattiesburg High School



# In My Desk

A Starkville elementary teacher brings on the sparkle

Amanda Gronewold

Photos by Amanda Gronewold

“I’m a very sparkly person,” explained Tassie Rosamond, a fourth-grade teacher at Henderson Ward Stewart Elementary School in Starkville. “I kind of treat every day almost like it was Halloween.” With such a bubbly personality, it’s no surprise that glitz, glamor, and shine influence Rosamond’s teaching methods. Here is how she uses some of the dazzling objects that can be found in and around her desk:

## Clothespins

Rosamond uses her signature sparkle to motivate her students to demonstrate good behavior. On her wall is a chart divided into



Tassie Rosamond

seven colors. Students begin the day with clothespins bearing their names clipped to the center of the chart, and the clips are moved up or down throughout the day based on behavior. The top tier of the chart is purple. “If you get to purple at the end of the day, I add a sparkle to your clip,” said Rosamond, indicating the small jewels adhered to some

clothespins. “When you get five sparkles, you get a new color clip....The first person who gets five chooses the next color clip for the entire class. The kids who show good behavior are in competition with each other to get to that next color first.” Rosamond also rewards students who go above and beyond purple by publicly displaying that student’s bedazzled clip on her glasses or shirt for the rest of the day.

## Sticky Notes

Rosamond uses sticky notes as “exit slips” to assess skills in math, reading, and language. For example, she may ask students to locate examples of concepts from their reading by writing answers on sticky notes that are displayed on the wall. Rosamond observed that many students feel overwhelmed when faced with a





blank piece of standard-sized paper. “But if you give them a Post-It note and say, ‘I’d like you to list three things that really stood out to you as you were reading,’ they can fill it up.”

### Glitter

Rosamond is a firm believer in the power of sparkle to turn around a bad day. She keeps several vials of glitter in her desk to share with students. “I ‘glitterize’ before I come to work, but there are some kids that really just look like they’re having a rough start, so they’ll come to my desk and ask for a little glitter, and I’ll do a little glitter sprinkle on them,” said Rosamond. “It doesn’t just stop in fourth grade; I’ll have former students that come back on a very regular basis to get a little glitter. It just makes you feel better.”

### Flat Metal Washers

“Everybody has rules they have to follow when walking in the hall: walk on the black line, don’t talk, don’t turn around, pay attention, don’t touch the walls,” said Rosamond. “You’re so busy getting to your destination that you don’t always think to compliment a student who is doing the right thing.” Rosamond uses washers as tokens to choose “mystery walkers.” Each student has their number written on a washer, and before the class goes somewhere, Rosamond draws a token from a box. If the student whose token she picked shows good hallway behavior, he or she gets a small treat, such as a pencil or sticker, or

a privilege like eating lunch with a friend from another room. Otherwise, Rosamond quietly returns the token to the box so the misbehaving “mystery walker” is not embarrassed.







Take a peek inside this Starkville teacher's desk on page 30



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