

*"The State with
the Best Schools
Wins."*

*John Engler
Governor of Michigan
1991-2002*

Invited Speakers:

- **Dr. Roderick Paige**
U.S. Department of Education
- **Hon. Governor Haley Barbour**
- **Dr. Henry L. Johnson**
Mississippi Department of Education
- **Jayne Sargent, EdD**
Superintendent of Jackson Public Schools (retired)
- **Andy Taggart**
Ms Technology Alliance
- **Steve Williams**
MDE Lobbyist
- **Blake Wilson**
Ms. Economic Council

Capitol Day January 7, 2004

Please schedule your PTA Delegates now to attend our 29th Annual PTA Legislative Conference in Jackson. We hold our Capitol Day during the first week of the Legislative Session, when anything is still possible!

We know that the actions of our Mississippi Legislature will affect the lives of our children and grandchildren long into the future, so it is our responsibility, in our democracy, to advocate in the interest of our children, who have no voice of their own.

On Wednesday, January 7, join other parents and teachers from around our state to encourage our child health and education-friendly legislators. We will meet at the Mississippi Department of Education auditorium for a morning of powerful speakers. At noon, we walk across the street to Galloway United Methodist Church for a luncheon. We will be entertained by Jackson Public Schools Jazz quintet, and hear a stirring Keynote Address by our new Governor. Following lunch, we will walk across the street to the Capitol Building for tours and information sessions with Education Chairmen in key committees dealing with children's issues, or attend advocacy training workshops.

5 Cents Makes Sense

Did you know that of our federal tax dollars, only 1.7% goes toward education? National PTA is taking a leadership role in asking our U.S. Senate and House of Representative to take the bold step of budgeting 5 % of the annual budget to education for our children, for our future. Please e-mail or phone your Senator and Congressman with the message that you want a nickel from your tax dollars to go to our children's education. See PTA.org (legislation) for a quick link to our influential Mississippi legislators.

Meet Our New Board Member

Lynn Murray Evans of Jackson is our newest Mississippi PTA Board of Directors member. Lynn has served as President and Treasurer of several PTA's in Jackson City Schools where her two children attended. She has served on the JPS School Board, and served a term as President of the Board. A committed advocate of improving public schools, Lynn is a founding member of Parents for Public Schools.

We have already put Lynn to work as one of two Mississippi delegates at the National PTA Legislative Colloquium in Washington, last July. She is currently busy working with us in developing our Leg Day in Jackson this January 7.

Lynn is married to Dr. Bev Evans, Chairman of Pediatrics at The University of Mississippi Medical Center, and has been advocating for child health and education issues in the Mississippi Legislature for several years.

Who Sets PTA Agenda?

You do.

We are designed as a grassroots organization. That means the LOCAL membership has a powerful influence in the direction our organization takes. Units are being asked NOW to send resolutions to the state office for our state convention. Every Resolution is brought before our delegates at the annual spring convention and voted on...in the most fair way we know, using Roberts Rules of Order.

That is how I got to the State Board. Oxford's Bramlett Elementary PTA voted unanimously to send a Resolution concerning a 1972 law limiting school bonds for school facilities. Our state convention voted unanimously to send the resolution to National, and to make it a Legislative Priority within our state. We are still trying to change that law in Mississippi, and we need your help to do it.

That resolution became a line item in the National PTA Legislative Agenda. It is not a national issue, except generally that "state governments shall not limit funding by municipal governments..." It was our Mississippi delegate to National who introduced that good resolution.

Your Unit is asked to send delegates to convention. When your delegates vote at convention on our resolutions, the Mississippi Board of Directors supports those resolutions with their actions, including them in our annual Legislative Priority List.

Last year there were no state resolutions sent up. So at convention, no resolutions were voted on. Given that, our Board of Directors will set our Legislative Priority List, with the VP for Legislation taking the lead. For two years, this VP Leg. has appointed a Legislative Advisory Committee, consisting of myself and anyone else on the Board who expresses interest in legislation. All are asked for feedback. The final priority list is voted on by the State Board of Directors meeting prior to PTA Capitol Day.

This is why we want you to recommend members for our State Board of Directors. That is why we request that you send Resolutions from your Unit Boards of Directors to Linda at our state office. She will publish those resolutions, and at our spring convention, our delegates will vote. That is why we want you to send voting delegates to state and national conventions. Your delegates will decide the direction of our organization.

That is the reason for our bylaws, our membership cards (which you must have with you to vote at the state and national meetings...since we can't recognize 27,000 Mississippi members personally!)

According to our bylaws, ("Where are your bylaws", we ask? YOU may update your own Unit bylaws every five years.) we are a bottom-up organization. But without input from Units through resolutions, and without active, working Board Members representing your Council and District, we have little direction from our membership.

That is when it starts looking top-down, which is NOT according to design.

We ask you to send YOUR delegates to our state convention this spring. We also want you to send delegates to our National PTA Convention and Exhibition this summer in Anaheim. Mississippi EARNS votes for delegates by our membership numbers. Each year, we are entitled to over 20 votes. National sends voting delegate cards to each state office. When we only send two or

three Mississippians to National Convention, that is the number of votes that get counted. We are giving away our influence. We are not fully representing our Mississippi membership.

PLEASE help Mississippi to be heard at National PTA. Send your delegates. Yes, it costs money, but you will gain so much information in return. If your Unit does not choose to exercise it's authority by paying expenses of its delegate, you may, like my family, make it part of your annual vacation plans. National PTA pays for our State President to attend, that is where a portion of your National dues goes. State PTA contributes \$500 toward the convention expenses of the winner of the "Opal Worthy PTA of the Year" winner. But it is up to your units, or individuals, to send additional delegates.

We always represent you proudly, to the best of our ability. Never think that National PTA is dictating what we do. It is the delegates who attend and vote who set the tone.

Join us June 26-28, please. (Disneyland, Anaheim in June...beat me with a stick! ☺)

What Do We Get for PTA Dues?

National PTA dues are used to pay the expenses of your elected state President to attend all National Events...Legislative Conference, Convention, Committee Meetings. National dues also pay many of the expenses for your VP Legislation and President-Elect to attend a Legislative Conference and a National Colloquium. Your National PTA dues bring a National officer to our state for one event (our choice) each year.

When your Unit invites a state Board member to present an officially recognized program, such as "Building Successful Partnerships" at your meeting, National pays the travel expenses of that Board member, plus a \$200 rebate to go into our state treasury.

National dues pay for the printing and mailing of *Our Children* magazine, which is sent to each Unit President quarterly. These dues pay for all other mailings, as well as the maintenance of our truly excellent website.

Your National dues pay for a modest office in Chicago with 60-odd employees which is required to manage an organization exceeding 6 million members. They do maintenance activities and develop new programs, and now also seek corporate funding. Dues also pay for a small Washington office which supports three legislative staff...lobbyist/researchers, who do their best to keep up with the ever-changing landscape of pending child health and education bills. Not only do they follow impending law, but ***we try to influence the design of new law, for the benefit of our children's health and wellbeing.*** Often, our National PTA President, a volunteer like you, is asked to speak at a hearing for a law affecting children, and your dues pay for her expenses. All along, our lobbyists do their best to interpret to our state legislative officers, and to you, what all of this complex law-making will mean to our children in future. This is done on the PTA website, in regular mailings, e-mail newsflashes, and at our National Legislative meetings.

As my Representative to the Ms House of Representatives said once, "Making law is like making sausage." PTA tries to inject parent and teacher logic and reality into a potentially chaotic system.

I always ask: "If PTA doesn't speak for the children, who will?"

“Education is the key to the quality of life in our communities and the economic competitiveness of our state.”

Mike Easley, Governor of North Carolina

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We're on the Web!
pta.org

PTA Meets with MDE

PTA leaders have been invited to the Mississippi Department of Education to discover ways we can work more closely together to benefit our children. We will meet on Tuesday, December 2. We will meet Dr. Henry Johnson, State Superintendent, and Ms. Judy Qualls, Director of Parent Relations and Legislative Support.

Please send us YOUR ideas and concerns, so that we may find productive ways to improve our children's schools, creating an increasingly effective environment for teaching and learning.

Please contact your Mississippi PTA Board Member, or let Linda or Tanya know your school improvement ideas. (Say hello to Tanya's brand new baby girl, Tristen, our youngest volunteer, who comes to the office to work with her Mama!)

MsPTA Board Positions



Are you a mom or dad who feels called to do more for our children? Have you done the last fundraiser you can stand, and want to do something a little more challenging and beneficial across the whole state of Mississippi?

If you have experience working with Boards of Directors, have a child in our school system, or just feel a calling to improve the lot of Mississippi's children in education, health, and wellbeing, we need you. It is helpful, but not imperative, that you have had leadership experience with a local PTA unit. We are a grassroots organization, and our being is centered and dependent on our local membership.

Please consider making a volunteer commitment to the Mississippi PTA! We have four board meetings each year. One is in tandem with summer PTA Camp leadership training, another is held in the fall, a third with the Leg. Conference in early January, and the fourth with Spring Annual Conference.

We are a volunteer organization. We have a paid part-time staff, but our Board of Directors is largely self-funded, so we are asking for a commitment in money as well as time. We operate "on a shoestring", but we will reimburse for travel whenever possible.

Calendar

Mississippi PTA Legislative Conference January 7, 2004, Jackson, MS

National PTA Legislative Conference February 21-24 Washington, DC

Mississippi PTA Annual Convention, April 28-May 1, Jackson, MS

National PTA Convention and Exhibition June 26-28 Anaheim, CA

MsPTA Stats 2002-2003

Mississippi PTA membership in 2003 exceeded 27,000. Our budget for 2003-2004 is \$98,000, with income primarily from dues, conferences, scholarship fundraiser, product sales, grants, and Founder's Day. The final budget will be published and distributed to member units. MsPTA awards scholarships to two university students who are preparing for a career in education.

Mississippi PTA Capitol Day 2004

29th Annual Legislative Conference

Mississippi Department of Education Auditorium
Old Central High School Building, 359 North West Street, Jackson, MS
Wednesday, January 7, Registration 8:30 AM, Program 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Invited Speakers: Dr. Rod Paige, Secretary of Education, U. S. Dept. of Education
Honorable Haley Barbour, Governor of Mississippi
Dr. Henry L. Johnson, State Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Jayne Sargent, Superintendent of Jackson Public Schools
Mr. Blake Wilson, Mississippi Education Forum
Mr. Steve Williams, Ms. Department of Education
Mr. David Watkins, Education Lobbyist, Adams and Reece
Mr. Andy Taggart, Mississippi Technology Alliance

Keynote Luncheon at Galloway United Methodist Church, Governor Barbour

Afternoon Tours of Capitol: House and Senate Education Committees
Advocacy Training Workshops

For those of you who may be coming to Jackson the night before, please make your own reservations at the Crowne Plaza, 601-969-5100 or the Edison Walthall Hotel, 601-948-6161.

Free parking at MDE parking garage, upper levels. When that space is filled, paid parking is available across the street **and** at the Crowne Plaza, one block away.

Name/s: _____

Address: _____

Phone: (area code _____) _____-_____

Email: _____@_____

PTA/School Unit: _____

Registration \$25.00 each, (**\$20.00 each if paid by Dec. 15, 2003**)

Non-Members \$35 each, \$30 before Dec. 15, includes advocacy booklet, parking, speakers, lunch, tours, workshop

Make Checks Payable to: **Mississippi PTA Legislative Conference**

Mail to: Mississippi PTA, PO Box 1937
Jackson, MS 39215-1937

For registration information, call Linda Long at Mississippi PTA 800-795-6123 or ms_office@pta.org
For legislation questions, call Mary Sloan, VP Leg. at 662-238-2630, or ms_sloan@bellsouth.net

Mississippi PTA supports legislation and regulation which secure funding for public education sufficient to provide optimum educational opportunity for all students.

“Adequate education” is not “Optimum education”.

We support bringing our Mississippi teacher pay to the Southeastern average pay.

We support the repeal of state-imposed limits to local funding of local public schools.

Local Units: Please bring your local issues forward to Mississippi PTA. Your actions may help another child in another town. This is the purpose of grass-roots organizations like PTA.

Easy to get to; just follow the route to "Central School Building" * shown from I-55.

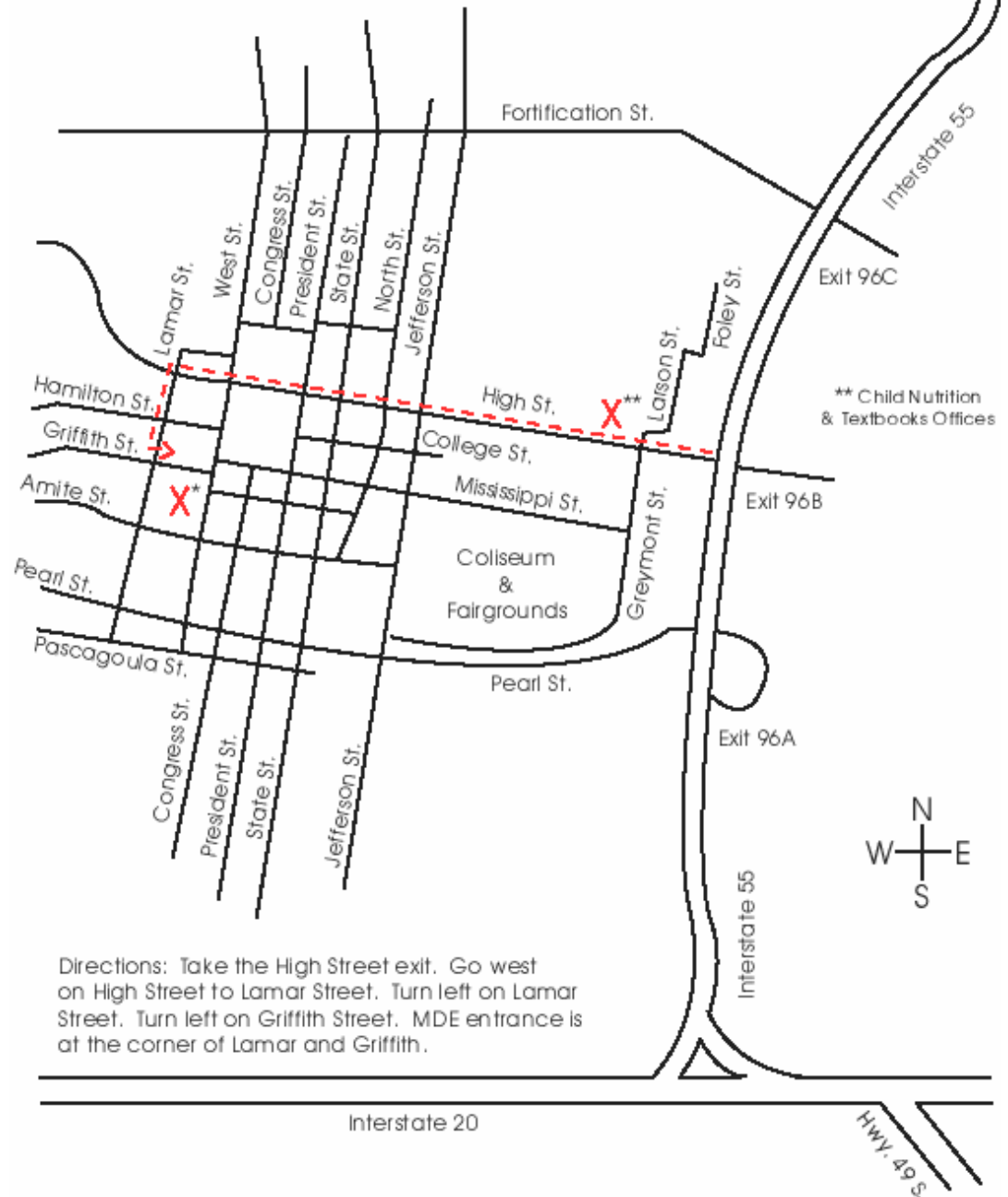
The Mississippi State Capitol is located between High Street and Mississippi Street, West Street and President Street.

From I-55, take exit 96B west. Follow High Street to Lamar, turn left, one way south. Third block down, between Griffith and Amite is free parking, lot is across the street from MDE to the west. MDE staff park on lower levels, but there will probably be space at the upper levels.

Walk east across Lamar Street, enter the MDE, "Old Central High School". Ask directions to the Auditorium.

Galloway UMC is across West St.

Mississippi Department of Education Central School Building* and Greymont Building**



Directions: Take the High Street exit. Go west on High Street to Lamar Street. Turn left on Lamar Street. Turn left on Griffith Street. MDE entrance is at the corner of Lamar and Griffith.

Mary Sloan
Vice President for Legislation 2002-2004
Mississippi PTA
607 Ridgewood Manor Drive
Oxford, MS 38655
662-238-2630

November 17, 2003

Dear Superintendents of Schools:

Please share this e-newsletter with leaders of each of your parent and teacher organizations, and with each of your school Principals and School Board.

For 97 years, Mississippi PTA volunteers have worked to provide a statewide forum supporting our public schools, through thick and thin. We are an organization made up of generous and loving Mississippi parents, grandparents and teachers.

One of the most important functions we offer is providing a forum for discussion of current education issues, and to advocate for improving our children's education.

I believe that our most productive activity last year was providing a venue for Governor Musgrove to launch his successful "early, full funding of public schools", which resulted in an historic 62% of our state budget committed to education, K-16. We served lunch to 150 parents, teachers, and legislators at Galloway United Methodist Church, across the street from the Capitol. We had excellent press coverage, carrying his bold message across our state.

We need your help. This is not an election year, so our public officials may not be quite as responsive as they were last year.

We need parent representation (PTA, PPS, or PTOther) from every school district in Mississippi, to hear our new Governor, the Honorable Haley Barbour, launch his education initiative. We need for Governor Barbour, Speaker McCoy, and Lt. Governor Tuck, and all of our elected leaders to know that parents and teachers are paying attention. We need for our parents to be empowered to be effective advocates for our children and our schools.

Please help us by sending **delegates from your District** to the **MDE in Jackson on Wednesday, January 7, 2004**. And thank you for your work in behalf of our children.

Sincerely,

Mary Sloan (John's Mama)