

Mississippi Reading Association

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Mississippi Reading Association
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From the Desk of the President:

From the President

These cold, gray, winter days can really bring on the grumpies. Everything is cold or wet and cold. The students are going crazy from being inside so much. The folks at the Capitol are blaming teachers for all our problems. What are professional educators to do?

After reflection I decided to focus on what was succeeding in my classroom. I have started to write on my blog about the learning going on in my sphere of influence. I found something each day that made me know learning was happening in my room.

I watched children use different strategies to make meaning out of print as I listened to individual students read. I heard a fourth grade girl make a real world

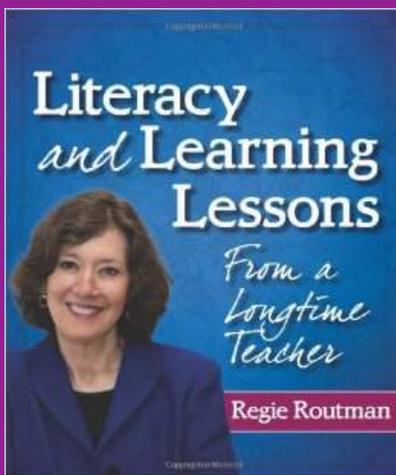
connection to a science experiment. Kindergarten students demonstrated their understanding of language as they made take-home books to share with their families.

Some days we want to be like Alexander and complain about our terrible, horrible, very bad day. An attitude of despair is contagious though. As teacher leaders we set the tone in our spheres of influence. If you need inspiration, read Regie Routman's *Literacy and Learning Lessons from a Longtime Teacher*. Or take a page from my friend Ashanti Barnes and greet each day as a 'great morning'.

All the best to you and your students,

MRA President

Janice Cate, NBCT



**GET THIS GET BOOK
RECOMMENDED BY
PRESIDENT CATE ON
THE ILA WEBSITE FOR
\$10.00 (MEMBERS)
or \$12.50
(NONMEMBERS)**

**WANT TO BE PUBLISHED IN
THE MRA NEWSLETTER!
EMAIL YOUR ARTICLES TO:
MHCOLUM@YAHOO.COM**

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MISSISSIPPI READING ASSOCIATION
104 Parkway Avenue
Cleveland, MS 38732
www.msreading.org



Greetings Literacy Advocates:

Plans are underway for the **45th Annual Mississippi Reading Association (MRA) Conference** which will be held on December 6-8, 2015 at the Beau Rivage Resort & Casino in Biloxi, MS. The theme of this year's conference, "Creating World-Class Literacy Connections", urges all stakeholders to **connect** with each other to promote effective literacy practices world-wide.

This event serves as a premier forum in making essential **connections** to improve the quality of literacy instruction, disseminate research-based literacy information, and build cadres of literacy experts commissioned to serve in local communities throughout Mississippi and beyond. MRA's annual conference aligns with its mission to improve literacy through education, professional development, advocacy, and research.

Last year, **more than 500 pre-school, elementary, middle, and high school teachers, administrators, and curriculum directors, as well as students and educators from post-secondary levels** converged to explore best practices in literacy instruction. This year, we hope to expand our efforts by **making targeted, impactful connections**. To add to the excitement of this conference, we plan to engage local and nationally-recognized literacy experts to share their wealth of experiences, best practices, and research in teaching literacy. In addition, we plan to give each attendee a welcome/keepsake gift bag of literacy resources to be used in their local communities and work areas.

To carry out this great work, **we need YOU to CONNECT with us!** The Mississippi Reading Association is asking **businesses, organizations, and stakeholders to show their support for literacy education by contributing to our conference**. We welcome your ideas, monetary donations and sponsorships, literacy resources, and time in making this event a tremendous success! Doing so is an excellent opportunity for you to validate your commitment to the advancement of literacy AND create world-class Literacy Connections!

For more information as to how you can be engaged in the MRA Conference 2015, contact Dr. Sherry Shepard, Conference Chair, at 104 Parkway Avenue, Cleveland, MS 38732 or visit our website at www.msreading.org.

Cordially,

Sherry Shepard, Ph.D.
MRA Conference Chair



December 6-8
2015

World-Class Literacy Connections

SAVE THE DATE

Mississippi Reading Association Conference
December 6 - 8, 2015 *** Biloxi, Mississippi

You don't want to miss this.

December 6-8
2015

MRA CONFERENCE 2015

- Outstanding Keynoters
- Meaningful Concurrent Sessions
- Power-Packed Exhibits
- Impactful Networking
- Insightful Presenters

CREATING WORLD-CLASS EDUCATIONAL SYSTEMS THROUGH IMPACTFUL LITERACY CONNECTIONS

STAKEHOLDERS ∞ BEST PRACTICES ∞ POLICIES ∞ LOCALES ∞ STRATEGIES ∞ ORGANIZATIONS

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MRA CONFERENCE 2015 CONTACT
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www.msreading.org

FROM THE CORE GURU:

As students enter the home stretch before the PARCC Performance Based Assessment, we still have a few days to prepare them for the writing tasks on the PBA. You may be asking yourselves, what can I do with so little time left? Here are two suggestions:

1. Review the example writing prompts on parcconline.org and the writing prompts in the mini-assessment section of achievethecore.org. Review the prompts with your students and help them to understand what is being asked in each prompt. A big part of the student's written expression score is answering the prompt with an effectively developed response. Therefore, it is vital students understand what they are being asked.

2. Students must show comprehension of what they read through their writing through an analysis of the text. Over the next few weeks, show your students how to answer the prompt using evidence from the text. Analyzing the text to choose the evidence that supports their answer will not only help them on the assessment but is good writing practice in general.

While we do not have a lot of time left to prepare our students for the assessment, keep in mind we are not just teaching our students to write for PARCC. We want to produce students prepared to write for college and careers.

Vincent Segalini, Office Director-English/Language Arts
Office of Curriculum and Instruction
Mississippi Department of Education
MRA BOARD



GENERAL SESSION SPEAKERS



Shaquille O'Neal



Octavia Spencer

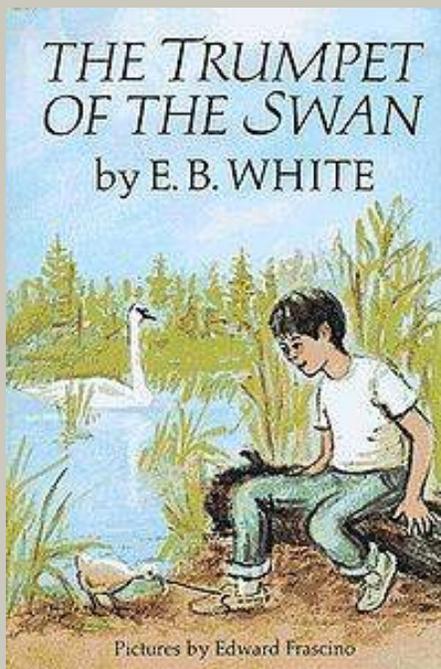
LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Quitman School District hosted a community-wide read as a kick-off for their school year. Using E. B. White's book, *The Trumpet of the Swan*, Quitman School District invited the whole community to read and learn together.

Copies of the book were provided free of charge to all families with a student in the school. Other community members were encouraged to purchase the book at a discount directly from the school. Everyone was provided with a weekly reading plan, as well as, ideas on how to extend text connections to their world.

Inside the classroom, some teachers read aloud to their students. Others extended the reading to art, science, social studies, and music activities. Outside the classroom, parents were encouraged to produce a project with their child. Weekly trivia questions posted around town encouraged everyone to talk about, "What is a cygnet?". Yard signs throughout town read, "We're reading. Are you?". Swan art painted on business storefronts brought a sense of cohesiveness to the community.

By: Superintendent Suzanne Hawley
Quitman School District



**Speaker's
Bureau for the
Mississippi Reading Association**

MRA is asking you to recommend people you know that are good speakers to invite to our Speaker's Bureau. We want to know something about the person, their presentation skills, and if they fit what we would want to put "OUR" name on.

Send Names with Emails to:
sopeets@yahoo.com

International Reading Association To Hold 2015 Annual Conference In St. Louis, MO, July 17-20, 2015

February 4, 2014—Newark, DE—The International Reading Association (IRA) revealed today that its 2015 Annual Conference will take place in St. Louis, Missouri on July 17–20, 2015. This announcement marks the first time that the Conference will be held during the summer, rather than in the spring.

“Our members have been asking for a shift to the summer for some time now,” explained Marcie Craig Post, IRA’s Executive Director, “and we are very happy that we were able to find a suitable summer venue for 2015. We are excited to be going to St. Louis.”

Post observed that the summer schedule will avoid disruptions during the regular school year and will eliminate the need for hiring substitutes to cover the classrooms of educators who are attending the Conference.

“Moreover,” she added, “since the Conference will take place about a month before the start of school, the instructional strategies and teaching insights learned at the Conference can quickly be put into practice.”

As for the event itself, it will follow the customary IRA format. Day-long topical Institutes will be held on July 17, 2015, followed by the three-day Conference, July 18–20, 2015.

In addition to hundreds of informative program sessions, the Conference will also feature an Exhibit Hall showcasing over 250 exhibiting companies offering education-related products and services, including academic publishers, software developers, curriculum designers, and others.

Dan Mangan

Director of Strategic Communications International Reading Association



2015 Mississippi Legislative Session: February Update

Kelly Riley, Executive Director, Mississippi Professional Educators

The appropriation process began this past month, as February 25 was the deadline for each chamber to adopt appropriation bills originating in its own house. The House passed HB 1536, the FY 16 (2015-2016 school year) K-12 appropriation bill, on February 18. Fully funding the MAEP formula will take an additional \$308 million next year. HB 1536 increases MAEP funding by approximately \$107 million, with \$40 million of this being for the second year of the teacher pay raise; thus, HB 1536 underfunds the MAEP formula by approximately \$201 million. HB 1536 is awaiting consideration by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Tax cut plans were popular in February. The House passed HB 1629 which eliminates the state’s individual income tax over the next 15 years. Mississippi’s individual income tax provides more than \$1.5 billion in revenue to the state. HB 1629 now heads to the Senate for consideration. The Senate passed its own tax cut plan via SB 2839 which would eliminate slightly less than \$400 million in state revenue. SB 2839 now heads to the House for consideration.

March will see each chamber considering amendments to its bills made by the other chamber. Such amendments must be agreed to by the chamber of origin or conference may be invited on the bill. If a bill goes to conference, three representatives and three senators will be appointed to negotiate an agreement. “Conference Weekend” will be the last weekend of March, with legislators working through the weekend to file conference reports on appropriation bills after all the pieces of the appropriation puzzle have been agreed to.

HB 474 and HB 484, the universal screener bills, must be passed out of Senate Education by March 3 if they are to remain alive. I anticipate that a number of education bills will end up in conference. The 2015 Legislative Session is scheduled to conclude on April 5.

