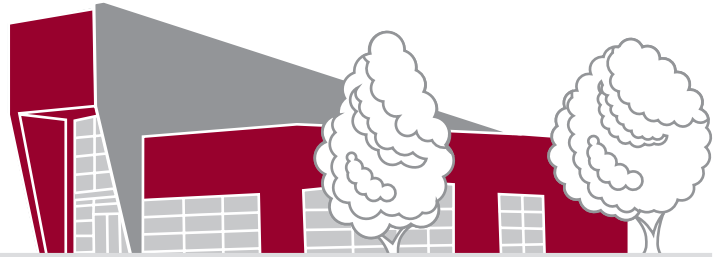


ANNUAL REPORT

15

Mississippi State University

Research and Curriculum Unit
Office of Research and Economic Development



The Research and Curriculum Unit, located in Starkville, Miss., as part of Mississippi State University, was formally established in 1965 to foster educational enhancements and innovations. Formerly a division within the College of Education, the RCU became a research center in 1999 under the Office of Research and Economic Development. In keeping with the land-grant mission of Mississippi State University, the RCU is dedicated to improving the quality of life for Mississippians. The RCU enhances intellectual and professional development of Mississippi students and educators while applying knowledge and educational research to the lives of the people of Mississippi. The RCU works within the contexts of curriculum development and revision, research, assessment, professional development and training.

For more information about the Research and Curriculum Unit, please visit the RCU's website at <http://www.rcu.msstate.edu>.

VISION

The RCU's vision is an innovative, equitable and sustainable economy for Mississippi.

MISSION

The RCU is dedicated to preparing a resilient and self-sufficient workforce through service, learning and research.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

There is so much change in the air right now that the expression “the only constant is change” simply does not resonate loudly enough to describe the depth and breadth of what is happening around the state. Almost every core education system is changing: Curricula standards, teacher- and administrator-evaluation systems, compensation systems, licensing requirements, graduation requirements, and accountability systems are all undergoing fundamental revision. Naturally, these new initiatives and challenges in education bring opportunities for the RCU to expand services and research activities.

Of late, the RCU’s services and support for career and technical education (CTE) have expanded from curricula, assessments, and instructional training to include rigorous standards-based evaluation. In response to the state’s new teacher- and administrator-evaluation systems, the RCU developed new training programs and tools to support CTE teachers and administrators. For example, one innovative component of the evaluation system includes the measurement of student growth for every CTE teacher. Late in the year, the RCU embarked on a two-year project to design a methodology and pilot a system that can fairly assign a metric of student growth to each CTE teacher in Mississippi.

On another front, the Mississippi Subject Area Testing Program (SATP) graduation requirement came under fire last year over the high failure rate among near-graduation students on the U.S. History assessment. Because the talented professionals at the RCU have developed a reputation for having the uncanny ability to adapt to Mississippi Department of Education requests and to find unique, immediate solutions, the team’s services were required. In May the team responded to the needs of more than 1,000 Mississippi high school seniors by providing the students one last chance to pass one of the required SATP assessments.

In another successful effort at meeting the inherent needs of the changing education climate. The RCU led the development of two new programs designed to address industry needs and prepare students for the high-growth jobs available in logistics and energy. The RCU’s role in developing these programs was indispensable; it is vital that our career and technical programs consistently evolve to meet the needs of the Mississippi workforce in this manner.

Following the 2012 report on teacher-performance pay, the RCU continued playing a leadership role in this reform effort. Awarded a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, we began a performance pilot initiative in three northeast-Mississippi school districts. Also, during the 2013 legislative session, Senate Bill 2658 tapped the RCU to study the outcomes of the performance- and incentive-pay programs around the state.

I am so proud of the team at the RCU. This group is remarkably dedicated to the mantra “Get it done.” Moreover, we are passionate about having a positive, lasting influence on the quality of our state’s education system. We continue to push ourselves to find innovative solutions to the pressing needs of Mississippi education; 2013 is evidence of that everyday passion.



Julie Jordan
Director, Research and Curriculum Unit
Mississippi State University

TEACHER PERFORMANCE-BASED-PAY PILOTS

BY JULIE JORDAN

ARC Performance-Based-Compensation Systems Phase 2

The Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) continued its leadership role in the research and implementation of Mississippi's teacher performance-pay initiatives this year.

“The keys to the project were to communicate with the teachers about the initiative, provide effective training for administrators and teachers on the new Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric, known as M-STAR, and facilitate a teacher-led taskforce through the process of designing a performance-pay plan.”

Following the summer 2012 release of the RCU's study of performance-pay models, the RCU received funding for Phase 2 of the initiative from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). The Phase 1 goals were to study the models, publish the findings, and make recommendations. Phase 2 was the next logical step, an implementation pilot. The three districts selected for the pilot were Amory, Kemper County, and Water Valley, and work began in October 2012.

The ARC funds provided comprehensive assistance and implementation support for the selected pilot districts. The keys to the project were to communicate with the teachers about the initiative, provide effective training for administrators and teachers on the new Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric, known as M-STAR, and facilitate a teacher-led taskforce through the process of designing a performance-pay plan. The ARC model recommends that each district design their own approach for awarding performance incentives. The only specific requirement

given is that the plan must be based upon multiple measures of teacher effectiveness; in this case, the minimum criteria must include the M-STAR evaluation process and some objective measure of student achievement. This inclusion of both a qualitative and quantitative component creates an equitable evaluation method.

The RCU team initially spent several days in each of the nine schools, visiting in small groups and sometimes meeting one on one with teachers and administrators, explaining how the pilot project would work and what to expect.

Lois Kappler, one of the 30 MDE-approved trainers on the new M-STAR teacher-evaluation system, provided training for principals and teachers in all the districts. Training focused on how to implement the new observation rubric with rigor and integrity in preparation for the performance-pay implementation.

Despite all of the changes happening in education this past year, superintendents were willing to participate in this groundbreaking, and sometimes controversial, initiative. Kappler said, “The willingness of superintendents and school boards to participate in this pilot indicates a real eagerness at the local level to explore options for rewarding our best teachers.”

By May 2013, all three districts had drafted a performance-pay plan based on evaluation results and student-achievement targets. The teacher-led teams had designed a financial payout model and established the criteria for the awards, which will be based on the 2013-2014 school-

year results. In addition to providing ongoing support for teacher evaluations, the RCU team continues to provide technical assistance in the data collection necessary to measure student achievement.

	Districts	Schools	Teachers	Students
TIF	7	10	379	5,100
ARC	3	11	284	4,200
GOV	4	65	2,478	38,000
Total	14	86	3,141	47,300

Governor's PBC Pilots

Governor Phil Bryant named four districts—Clarksdale, Gulfport, Lamar County, and Rankin County—as participants in the \$1.5 million project which began in the 2013-2014 school year. Making education his focus for the 2013 legislative session, Bryant promoted Senate Bill 2658, a comprehensive education-reform agenda known as the Mississippi Education Works Act. One part of the reform agenda included the first state-funded teacher performance-pay pilot project.

With the passage of this bill, these four districts joined the two other performance or incentive pay initiatives around the state, including the 10 federally funded Teacher Incentive Fund schools, a project managed by the Mississippi Department of Education, and the three ARC-funded pilot districts, managed by the RCU. Senate Bill 2658 also tapped the RCU to study the pilot initiatives in all three cohorts and report on the results.

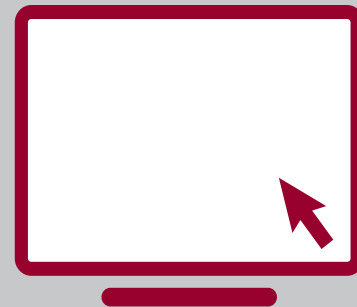
As the 2013-2014 school year began, more than 3,100 teachers in 86 schools across the state are part of some type of performance- or incentive-pay initiative. The RCU is actively involved in gathering data from these participants and helping the MDE study the impact of these programs. ■

MISSISSIPPI ASSESSMENT CENTER

The Mississippi Assessment Center brings together faculty and staff with demonstrated experience in researching, developing and disseminating statewide career and technical assessments to participate in test alignment and validation reviews. Dedicated and professional staff, efficient timelines, and valuable experience enable the MAC to deliver the required materials and services in the most timely and economic manner for the Mississippi Department of Education and the Mississippi Community College Board. The MAC offers high-quality assessments and professional development aligned with the state curriculum.

Assessment by the Numbers

- 26,545 CTE students tested electronically
- 97 postsecondary tests developed
- 136 secondary tests developed
- 198 assessments, including an estimated 3,000 MS-CPAS2 items delivered
- 150 teachers participated in alignment, reliability and validity reviews and facilitated test days.
- 1,209 students tested for emergency Subject Area Testing Programs for all districts



HIGH SCHOOL SUBJECT-AREA-TESTING SPECIAL ADMINISTRATION

BY JULIE JORDAN

U.S. History Special Administration

Mississippi high school students must pass four end-of-course exams in core subjects as a state-mandated graduation requirement known as the Subject Area Testing Program (SATP). Many students struggle to pass the tests administered at the end of the courses in algebra, biology,

“These high-stakes tests carry real consequences because most seniors who do not pass these assessments drop out and never graduate.”

English II, and U.S. history. The rigor of the exams has changed over time and, for the graduating class of 2012-2013, the U.S. history test was updated. Subsequently, what had been widely considered the easiest of the four exams was perceived to be the most difficult. Usually taken at the end of the junior year, students who fail the test have few opportunities to retest. Entering the 2012-2013 school year, there were approximately 5,000 seniors across the state needing to retake the U.S. history test in order to meet graduation requirements.

The Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) turned to the Mississippi Assessment Center at the Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) to provide a solution, offering students two additional opportunities to take the U.S. history exam. Collaborating with the MDE assessment staff, two supplemental testing dates were added to the schedule. As the test booklets and score forms were collected around the state, the exams were delivered to the RCU for grading. The key to the process was timing. Typically, it takes six to eight weeks for scores to return to the students. The RCU was asked to grade the assessments, validate the results, and

report outcomes in fewer than three days, so students would know as quickly as possible whether they needed to try again or had met the requirements to graduate. These high-stakes tests carry real consequences because most seniors who do not pass these assessments drop out and never graduate.

During the February and April special administrations, the RCU scored and reported on 5,724 U.S. history exams, successfully meeting the three-day turnaround time on reporting scores to the MDE.

Emergency Subject Area Testing

Every year, there are a small number of students who meet eligibility for the MDE Emergency SATP program. Eligibility typically occurs when a student enrolls in a Mississippi high school from another state and does not have an opportunity to take the required SATP tests. For these special cases, the RCU provides a location for students to take a written test prior to graduation. Before 2013, the RCU would test some 40 to 50 students during May of each year.



“With just one day’s notice, the RCU staff pulled off the seemingly impossible logistical task of scheduling and testing 1,000 students from almost every district in the state...”

The MDE relaxed eligibility criteria in 2013, which qualified many more students for emergency SATP testing. As a result of the changed MDE standards, the RCU had just 24 hours to prepare the entire staff to test not the expected 50 students, but 1,000. With just one day’s notice, the RCU staff pulled off the seemingly impossible logistical task of scheduling and testing 1,000 students from almost every district in the state over a period of six days onsite at the RCU and the MSU campus. Scheduling for the May 16-May 23 testing was handled via personal phone calls to district test coordinators and superintendents. Arrangements for students requiring special testing accommodations had to be organized. Many of these students required their own test reader and proctor.

The logistics were challenging and the stakes were high, but the most stressful requirement was the manual grading of the tests and reporting either pass or fail results to the districts on the same day. Same-day reporting was required because all of these students needed to pass the test in order to participate in their class graduation ceremonies, some even testing and commencing on the same day.

The total number of emergency SATP tests administered was 1,209. By taking these emergency tests, approximately 300 students met the last requirement to earn their diploma and were able to walk with their class. The 300 who earned a diploma versus dropping out will generate an estimated \$31 million for the state of Mississippi in added lifetime income without accounting for any additional education they might gain.

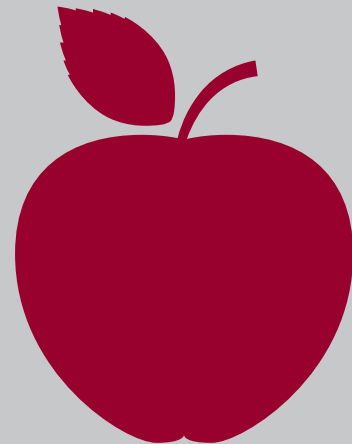
While emergency SATP of this scope may never happen again, this event was a perfect example of how the RCU and the MDE collaborates to find solutions for education challenges. ■

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING CENTER

The Professional Learning Center helps educators perfect their craft of teaching. Using versatile teaching styles combined with the latest technological delivery methods, the PLC encourages educators to implement innovative teaching strategies to instruct an increasing population of diverse learners. Professional-development seminars are based on a philosophy of continuous improvement measured through student performance that identifies areas where additional educator learning is necessary.

Face-to-Face Training

- **Over 2,500 participants completed face-to-face training sessions.**
- **Over 1,500 teachers participated in one of the RCU's online courses.**





PUBLIC RELATIONS & PUBLICATIONS

Promoting the Value of Education

The RCU communication team provides strategic and creative solutions for public relations, educational market research, and technical-analysis projects that ultimately generate a positive public image of education, promoting its value to the state of Mississippi.



Print & Multimedia Projects

- **The RCU distributed two issues of Connections in print and electronic formats to over 2,000 education stakeholders around the state.**
- **The RCU produced a video demonstrating the application of M-STAR in the CTE classroom.**
- **The RCU print shop completed more than 460 projects.**

PUBLICATIONS

Dechert, K., & Sibley, D. (2013, March). Understanding Mississippi's Creative Culture: Hospitality and Tourism in the Delta. Research and Curriculum Unit: Mississippi State, MS.

Jordan, J., & Dechert, K. (2012, November). Public Perception of Career and Technical Education in Mississippi. Research and Curriculum Unit: Mississippi State, MS.

Jordan, J., Dechert, K., & Wainwright, H. (2012). Hiring the Right Person for the Job: The Key to CTE Center Success. Techniques, 87(8), 10-11.

PATHWAYS TO SUCCESS

The Pathways to Success promotional toolkit is available online at www.rcu.msstate.edu/MDE/PathwaystoSuccess. Training on the toolkit was provided to 20 school districts, helping 95 teachers and administrators learn more about promoting their programs.

PILOT OF TEACHER INDUCTION PROGRAM USING SREB MODEL

The RCU completed a major revision to the new-teacher-induction training program for CTE teachers entering the field without a traditional educator license. The training program includes a 2-week intensive summer workshop, followed by site visits and quarterly 2-day sessions throughout the year. More than sixty new teachers participated last year.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND SERVICES

- Columbus Lowndes Habitat for Humanity
- Exchange Club of Columbus
- Healthy Starkville Committee
- Henderson Ward Stewart Parent Teacher Organization
- Junior Auxiliary of Columbus
- Junior Auxiliary of Starkville
- Kiwanis Club of Starkville
- Leadership Mississippi 2012
- Moving You to MSU (MVNU2MSU)
- Mississippi Association of Community and Junior Colleges
- Mississippi State University Financial Education Partnership
- Service Dawgs
- Starkville Area Habitat for Humanity
- Starkville Community Market Board
- Starkville Parent Teacher Association
- Starkville Pregnancy Care Center
- Starkville Raiders Little League Football
- Starkville Soccer Association
- United States Federal Reserve Board Educator Advisory Board
- West Point-Clay County Animal Shelter

TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL EVALUATIONS

New Reforms for Educators Across the State

BY JULIE JORDAN

Teacher Evaluation

The 2013-2014 school year has brought changes in the way all schools evaluate educators—a prospect causing both excitement and consternation as the state’s evaluation

“The evaluation process for teachers will be gradually implemented by the MDE over the next three years, with full implementation occurring in the 2015-2016 school year.”

tools continue to undergo field-testing. Under grants and contracts from the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE), the Research and Curriculum Unit (RCU) is engaged in several activities ranging from training, piloting student-growth measures, evaluating implementation, supporting data collection, and studying outcomes.

The evaluation process for teachers will be implemented gradually by the MDE over the next three years, with full implementation occurring in the 2015-2016 school year. Eventually, a teacher’s overall evaluation rating will be based on his or her Mississippi Statewide Teacher Appraisal Rubric, commonly known as M-STAR, score (30%), schoolwide growth (20%), individual-student growth (30%), and professional-growth-goals attainment (20%). However, in the 2013-2014 year, teachers’ ratings will be based only on the M-STAR component and schoolwide growth.

Perhaps the most difficulty in the implementation process will come from the individual-student-growth portion of the evaluation. The common method of measuring student growth is to evaluate results of the statewide assessments administered to all students in Grades 3-8 in math and reading, along with the four subject-area tests in high school.

The teachers in these grades and subjects are commonly referred to as “tested-area” teachers. For Mississippi, the challenge is that around 65% of our teachers are not teaching in tested areas. Thus, new methods, policies, and procedures must be designed and implemented over the next two years to measure student growth for every teacher.

Currently, the RCU is working closely with the MDE on piloting a method to calculate student growth using a baseline assessment and an end-of-course assessment for career and technical education (CTE) teachers. The

goal is to measure a teacher’s contribution to individual-student growth by evaluating the increase in students’ scores over the academic year. “Every teacher’s goal is to move the needle—we all want students to finish each class knowing much more than when they started,” said Betsey Smith, interim manager of the Mississippi Assessment Center at the RCU, which administers the MS-CPAS2 yearly statewide assessment to CTE students.

Jean Massey, associate superintendent of CTE, added,



“The objective for our first pilot year is to inform the CTE teacher-evaluation process. We are collecting data so that we can set realistic expectations for future cohorts of CTE students.”

In August 2013, the RCU electronically administered baseline assessments across the state to over 16,000 students. These students will take the end-of-course assessment in April, at which time two growth models will be applied and the outcomes evaluated for fairness.

The interactive instruction that takes place in CTE classrooms makes career and technical educators prime candidates for success in the new evaluation process. “CTE teachers who may be nervous about their scores on the M-STAR rubric can relax,” said Lois Kappler, project manager at the RCU. “CTE teachers should remember that they are already implementing 80% of the M-STAR rubric. High-quality, effective teaching is the same for everyone, regardless of the subject matter. Some indicators on the M-STAR rubric are actually easier for the CTE teachers to hit because their classrooms are so hands-on,” Kappler noted.

Instead of CTE teachers becoming overly focused on ratings, Kappler believes they have an opportunity over the next few years to improve their pedagogy. “This is a perfect time for teachers to be more reflective about their classroom practices, set professional goals for themselves, and start directing their own professional development,” said Kappler.

CTE teachers and directors may rest easier knowing that MDE officials have stressed that the next two years of the teacher- and principal-evaluation systems are intended to be formative in nature, so that both processes can be further studied and streamlined. CTE teachers and directors—like their counterparts in traditional academia—will receive numerical evaluation scores in 2013-2014 for data-gathering purposes, but the MDE will not officially classify educators as “Distinguished,” “Effective,” “Emerging,” or “Unsatisfactory” until the process has been evaluated and

This project impacts all 3,000 CTE teachers across the state. The methodology potentially influences how student growth for all nontested-area teachers in MS will be measured.

Principal Evaluation

Like teachers, all principals are being evaluated with a new evaluation model, which was first piloted in 2012-2013 by the MDE’s Office of Federal Programs with 219 principals representing 34 districts.

Starting in 2013-2014, the Mississippi Principal Evaluation System (MPES) debuted statewide, requiring participation by head principals of public schools serving the state’s K-12 population. Almost 1,500 principals are participating in the new principal-evaluation system this year and are being evaluated on four components: an English/language arts student goal (25%), a math student goal (25%), two organizational goals (20%), and a leadership survey (30%).

MDE representatives say their office has seen widespread support of the MPES. “Districts have demonstrated their commitment to helping us meet the federal requirement to implement a consistent evaluation policy for our principals statewide,” said Debbie Murphy, bureau manager of the MDE’s Office of Federal Programs. Murphy stressed that the MPES advisory board, comprising volunteers in administrative roles across the K-12 spectrum, has been instrumental in providing feedback about the MPES during its first year of statewide implementation. “We rely on that group to voice our administrators’ priorities and concerns,” Murphy said. “As a former principal myself, my goal is to ensure that the MPES is fair and transparent to all administrators.”

With less than three months before the first deadline in the principal evaluation process, the MDE Office of Federal Programs contracted with the RCU to design a data-collection process. The MDE needed a fast and inexpensive

solution, so all the required forms could be collected from the 1,500 principals by the September deadline. The solution needed to include a way to report information concerning those who had not met the deadline, a way to study the results, and a way to collect the data from the future results of the leadership survey. Ultimately, all the information must be combined with the student-achievement results for each principal at the end of the school year.

A solution was found in Canvas, the learning-management system recently adopted by the MDE and administered by the RCU for career and technical education classes. With support from Instructure, the RCU team quickly configured a solution in Canvas to meet the data-collection needs for the principal-evaluation system. The RCU then provided online training for all 1,500 principals and registered them with unique usernames and passwords. Due to the time constraints, all of this had to be completed in less than 90 days.

As the 2013-2014 school year unfolds, the MPES team at the RCU, led by Alexis Nordin, continues to evaluate and adapt the data-collection procedures to make them as simple as possible for the principals while continuing to meet the requirements of the MDE.

Further information and training on both the teacher- and principal-evaluation systems will be offered by the MDE throughout the 2013-2014 school year. For more information about the new evaluation tools, contact Lois Kappler, lois.kappler@rcu.msstate.edu or Alexis Nordin, alexis.nordin@rcu.msstate.edu. ■

This project impacts over 1,500 principals in all districts across the state.

HIGH PERFORMANCE LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

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Mississippi State University's High Performance Leadership Institute (HPLI) added cohorts five and six during FY13. HPLI is designed to help school leaders dramatically improve their schools. Whether underperforming and aiming for success, or flourishing and striving for star status, HPLI participants use innovative approaches that lead to rapid change rather than incremental improvements. HPLI is a two-year program that includes on-campus training sessions, technical visits to participating schools, and site visits to high performing schools. This project is funded in part by a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) and the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE).

To date, nine school districts (35 schools) in the ARC region have been served through the HPLI project. This includes six cohorts of two to three teams, with 6-7 participants per team, representing over 100 individuals. Cohort five includes two teams from Alcorn County School District and one team from Benton County School District. Cohort six includes two additional teams from Alcorn County School District and one from Benton School District.

A two-year no-cost extension through September 2015 was requested from the ARC in April 2013 and awarded in June 2013. The RCU leaders on this project are Julie Jordan and Lynn Eiland.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

POSTSECONDARY

A TOTAL OF

16

UPDATED
CURRICULA
IMPACTED

104

PROGRAMS
ACROSS THE
STATE.

SECONDARY

A TOTAL OF

7

UPDATED
CURRICULA
IMPACTED

192

PROGRAMS
ACROSS THE
STATE.



**120 TEACHERS PARTICIPATED
IN WRITING CURRICULA.**

RCU LAUNCHES NEW CURRICULA IN ENERGY AND LOGISTICS

BY HEATHER CRAIG, ALEXIS NORDIN, & LEANNE LONG

The 2012-2013 school year welcomed two new career and technical education (CTE) pathways for Mississippi students: Energy Technology and Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics. RCU instructional design specialists Lemond Irvin and LeAnn Miller worked closely with the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) as well as industry leaders

“The cooperative efforts of industry leaders, educators, and RCU staff in creating the new curricula display a marked optimism about future industry jobs for Mississippi students in both fields.”

in both fields to create hands-on, relevant curricula for the new pathways. When asked how the need for the programs was revealed, Miller explained that industry leaders sought educators’ help in filling the knowledge and skills gaps of the up-and-coming workforce. The cooperative efforts of industry leaders, educators, and RCU staff in creating the new curricula display a marked optimism about future industry jobs for Mississippi students in both fields. Both curricula are designed to easily transition students to the workforce by offering theory-based and hands-on educational experiences.

Miller enjoyed her role as developer of the Energy Technology curriculum and said, “I think the best part has been the contact and communication between industry and teachers because we brought them together.” In fact, developing the Energy Technology curriculum involved quite a lot of collaboration: Scott Strahan of Mississippi Power, Lonell Huff of Entergy, Sumesh Arora of Strategic Biomass Solutions, and Craig Eichelkraut of Alstom worked together to produce a program that is as realistic as possible, showing students what they can expect in various real-world energy careers.

Serving as a liaison between energy-industry leaders and CTE educators, the RCU included the three instructors piloting the program in the collaboration: Robert Alford of the Lawrence County Technology and Career Center in Monticello, Bruce Lampe of the Lamar County Center for Technical Education in Purvis, and Robert Ordahl of Pascagoula’s Vocational Technical Center. The three pilot schools were selected partly based on their proximity to energy-technology employers, said Miller. She noted that other high schools have expressed interest as well.

Miller also worked closely with MDE STEM Program Supervisor Kendra Taylor, who

oversaw the implementation of the pilot. “There are not a lot of states with energy curricula—this is fairly new,” Miller said. Curriculum specialists in Mississippi adapted the program for Mississippi’s students with help from the Florida Energy Workforce Consortium, which implemented a similar program two years ago.

Miller noted that Energy Technology completers who immediately enter the workforce may have a better chance than their untrained peers of securing apprenticeships or entry-level positions as natural gas mechanics, crew assistants, meter technicians, and maintenance electrical operators. Ideally, however, she hopes that students who complete the Energy Technology curriculum in high school will continue their training at a community college or university, enabling them to qualify for higher level, higher paying starting positions in the energy field. And industry leaders agree. “Once they get to the community college, they are going to be aware of what’s available as far as energy is concerned,” Ann Holland of Mississippi Power stressed. “Not everyone has to have that four-year degree. With a technical degree, you can do just as well,” Holland concluded.

Irvin speaks just as hopefully of the cooperation between educators and industry leaders in creating the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics pathway. James Pittman at Jackson Career Development Center, and Mike Doss at Desoto County Career and Technology Center-East served as pilot instructors for the new logistics pathway, paving the way for great opportunities for other CTE centers in the state. Industry ties to the program are also strong because logistics-industry representatives from Mississippi helped guide the curriculum development. National companies with local sites, including UPS, AAA, Cooper Transportation, Southeastern Freightlines, American Eurocopter, Williams-Sonoma, and Lockheed Martin, provided information about the transportation-logistics industry. “Having community support is key to any new pathway’s success,” Irvin emphasized.

Like Energy Technology, the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics pathway also displays the RCU’s fruitful efforts at writing hands-on curriculum that offers students valuable real-world experience, such as learning about the three main parts of transportation logistics: supply-chain management, transportation, and distribution. So far, 31 students are enrolled in the new curriculum, which focuses during the first year on distribution, the process of receiving, stocking, procuring, and shipping in the safest and most timely manner. In their second year, the students will



learn about supply-chain management to understand how companies provide inventory management and shipping to their customers.

Students who finish the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics program will be prepared for careers in the transportation industry, a growing business in the state of Mississippi. According to Doss, “It would be feasible [for

“Industry ties to the program are also strong because logistics-industry representatives from Mississippi helped guide the curriculum development.”

students] to get a nice paying job right after graduation” because companies have already asked about when the first group of students will graduate.

Teaching any new subject can be a matter of trial and error, but the two logistics instructors are participating in professional-development opportunities as they implement their curriculum to help ease the transition. In September, Irvin attended a conference in Utah with instructors Doss and Pittman. There, they interacted with top companies in the field, including Kellogg, SYSCO, and Wal-Mart, to learn about warehousing, supply chains, and best practices. Both Pittman and Doss found the conference to be valuable to their teaching and returned to Mississippi with information they have been using to teach current lessons and to plan future instruction. “Every class I took was beneficial,” said Doss.

With a first-year pilot coming to a close, the groundwork for scaling up both programs is in place. If adopted statewide, the programs will help provide bright futures for Mississippi’s students who pursue careers in these dynamic, worldwide fields. For more information about the Energy Technology curriculum, contact LeAnn Miller, leann.miller@rcu.msstate.edu. For more information about the Transportation, Distribution, and Logistics curriculum, contact Lemond Irvin, lemond.irvin@rcu.msstate.edu. ■

ACCOMPLISHMENTS & PROFESSIONAL SERVICE



- Kristen Dechert, project manager, was named Vice-President of Programs for the Starkville/MSU chapter of Public Relations Association of Mississippi and earned a state-level Award of Excellence from the Public Relations Association of Mississippi for her story, Sustainable CTE: Construction Students Build Culinary Arts Facility in Wayne County, published in the fall 2012 issue of Connections.
- Dr. Lemond Irvin was appointed to be a SkillsUSA Corporate Member representing Mississippi and as an at-large board member for the National Association of Industry-Specific Training Directors.
- Dr. Scott Kolle, senior research associate and project manager, was appointed as a member of the Career Pathways Collaborative and as taskforce member for the General Agriculture Assessment based in Kansas City, MO. He was also selected to participate in the Mississippi Community College Leadership Academy.
- Dr. Leanne Long, assistant research professor and professional learning project manager, served as Learning Forward Mississippi President for 2012-2013 and was appointed to Learning Forward's Innovation Configuration Maps Taskforce for Volume III.
- LeAnn Miller, instructional design specialist, earned a Master of Science in Technology degree from Mississippi State University.
- Roslyn Miller, research associate III and data coach, represented Mississippi Council of Teachers of Mathematics (MCTM) to the Delegate Caucus and Assembly of National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (NCTM) and served as program coordinator for the MCTM Fall Conference, webmaster and newsletter editor for MCTM, and referee for the NCTM journal Mathematics Teacher.
- Dr. Sean Owen, associate research professor and assessment manager, served on the National Certification General CTE Assessment and the National Certification General Agriculture Assessment Advisory Committees. Additionally, he was chosen as a member of the Career Pathways Collaborative and as a taskforce member for the General Education and General Agriculture Assessment areas in Kansas City, MO. Owen also earned a Certification of Best Practices in Online Instruction.
- Myra Pannell, research associate III and instructional design specialist, served as secretary of the Engineering and Technology Division of the Association for Career and Technical Education and as chair for the National Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics Cluster Workgroup for the School Codes for the Exchange of Data project.
- Denise Sibley, senior research associate and instructional design specialist, was a member of the Career Pathways Collaborative and a taskforce member for the Comprehensive Business and Finance Assessment area in Kansas City, MO.
- Betsey Smith, research associate III and curriculum manager, became Real Colors Facilitator Certified.
- Dr. Michelle Taylor, project manager and online learning specialist, completed the Education Policy Fellowship Program.
- Jo Ann Watts, senior research associate and instructional design specialist, was appointed as a SkillsUSA Corporate Member representing Mississippi.
- The RCU earned state-level Public Relations Association of Mississippi Awards of Excellence for the following publications: the 2012 MDE Annual Report, the 2012 ORED Annual Report, and the fall 2012 issue of Connections.



STATE-LEVEL PRESENTATIONS

Eiland, L. (2012, July).

Finding Funding Opportunities & Grant Writing. Mississippi Association of Career and Technical Education Annual Conference, Jackson, MS.

Irvin, L.D., & Skelton, B. (2012, July).

New Automotive Program Standards. Mississippi Department of Education and Mississippi Association of Career and Technical Educators Annual Conference, Jackson, MS.

Miller, L. (2012, October).

Careers in Energy. Governor's 2012 Energy Career Expo, Jackson, MS.

Miller, R. (2013, April).

Multiple choice mathematics assessments and mathematics achievement. Presented poster at College of Education Faculty/Student Research Forum, Mississippi State University.

Owen, S.M. (2013, February).

Technology tools for the fast lane. Mississippi Educational Computing Association Conference, Jackson, MS.

Owen, S.M. (2012, August).

How to access and use your online data to improve MS-CPAS2 test scores. Career and Technical Education (PSCTE) Summer Conference, Jackson, MS.

Owen, S.M. (2012, July).

How to access and use your online data to improve MS-CPAS2 test scores. Mississippi Department of Education and Mississippi Association of Career and Technical Educators Annual Conference, Jackson, MS.

Pannell, M. (2013, February).

Career Academies in Mississippi. PREPS Conference, Jackson, MS.

Pannell, M. (2012, September).

Law and Public Safety Curriculum Outline. Law and Public Safety Forum, Raymond, MS.

Smith, B. (2012, July).

Pathways to Success. Mississippi Association of Career and Technical Education Conference, Pearl, MS.

Taylor, M. (2012, July).

Twitter for Educators. Mississippi Association of Career and Technical Educators Annual Conference, Jackson, MS.



NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS

Bowen, M., (2012, August).

Certification of Online Learning. Oakland School District, Waterford, MI.

Bowen, M. & LaMothe, D., (2012, December).

Mississippi and Michigan: A C.O.O.L. Connection. Association of Career and Technical Education Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Brocato, K., Willis, C., & Dechert, K. (2012, November).

Using a Longitudinal Data System to Rally Trust, Empowerment, and Involvement: Ideas for Principals and Teacher Leaders. University Council for Educational Administration Annual Convention, Denver, CO.

Irvin, L. (2012, December).

The Eeny, Meeny, Miny, Mo Approach to Strategic Problem Solving with Teams. Association of Career and Technical Education Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Irvin, L. (2012, November).

Blogging 101- Setting up your site FREE with Wordpress. National Association of Agricultural Educators, Atlanta, GA.

Owen, S., & Smith, B. (2012).

The effect of work-based learning on early childhood education. Annual Career Technical Education Research Conference, St. Louis, MO.

Smith, B. and Bowen, M. (2012, November).

B.R.A.V.E.S. Association of Career and Technical Education Conference, Atlanta, GA.

Smith, B. and Owen, S. (2012).

The Effect of Work-Based Learning on Early Childhood Education. Association of Career and Technical Education Research, Atlanta, GA. [Poster Session]

Taylor, M. (2012, July).

Using Web 2.0 Tools inside Blackboard Learn: The Big Easy. Blackboard World, New Orleans, LA.

CURRENT GRANTS

Project Name	Funding Agency	Project Period	Funding
High Performance Leadership Institute	<i>Appalachian Regional Commission</i>	October 2009 - September 2015	\$897,865
The HPLI is an innovative approach that helps education leaders make dramatic shifts in school performance. The RCU provides real-time support with onsite retreats, site visits, teleconferences and online chats.			
Teacher Education for Rural Middle Schools (TERMS)	<i>U.S. Department of Education</i>	September 2011 - October 2014	\$185,000
The RCU serves as an evaluator of TERMS, an alternative-route master of arts in teaching degree program, that aims to attract nonteaching professionals into the classroom.			
Evaluation	<i>Mississippi Delta Workforce Funding Collaborative</i>	March 2012 - March 2014	\$44,030
The RCU is evaluating whether Mississippi Delta residents are learning how to live healthier lifestyles and improve socioeconomic status as a result of health and financial back-to-work classes.			
Performance-Based Compensation System	<i>Appalachian Regional Commission</i>	October 2012-September 2014	\$304,563
Effective Teachers and Performance Pay, an RCU research report, proposes a performance-based compensation system that will work with M-STAR, the new MDE teacher-evaluation model.			
MS-CPAS2	<i>MDE</i>	Annually	\$471,428
Career and Technical Education	<i>MDE</i>	Annually	\$2,903,876
Common Core State Standards Implementation Survey	<i>MDE</i>	November 2012-June 2013	\$8,500
Engineering Project	<i>MDE</i>	November 2012-June 2013	\$11,762
Construction Education	<i>MDE</i>	July 2012-June 2013	\$86,000
Mississippi Department of Employment Security Contract (MDES)	<i>MDES</i>	September 2012-June 2013	\$12,000
Career Pathways in the Hospitality and Tourism Sector in Ms Delta	<i>Foundation for the Mid-South</i>	November 2012-June 2013	\$13,200
IHL Counseling Training	<i>IHL</i>	June 2009-July 2013	\$62,023
Education Outreach for Intermodal Transportation-Moving Minds at the Speed of time	<i>National Center for Intermodal Transportation for Economic Competitiveness</i>	July 2012-December 2013	\$50,091

FUNDING SUMMARY



Current Contracts

FISCAL YEAR **FISCAL YEAR**
2011 - 2012 **2012 - 2013**

**MISSISSIPPI
DEPARTMENT OF
EDUCATION**

\$3,680,923

July 2011 - June 2012

\$3,481,566

July 2012 - June 2013

**IHL COUNSELOR
TRAINING/COLLEGE
KNOWLEDGE**

\$62,023

June 2009 - September 2012

\$62,023

June 2012 - September 2013

EXTENDED

TOTAL VALUE
of all current grants and contracts

\$5,098,349

Fiscal Year 2011- 2012

\$8,289,164

Fiscal Year 2012- 2013

2012-2015

MISSISSIPPI STATE
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