

# 2021 Virtual Conference Program

## Welcome from Mississippi CEC



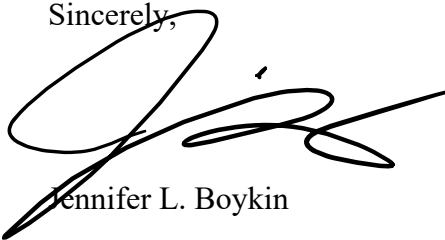
On behalf of the Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children, I would like to welcome you to the Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children (MS-CEC) 2022 Virtual Conference. We are honored to present this year's conference with the expertise and innovation of our friends at the North Mississippi Education Consortium (NMEC) who have made this virtual event possible.

We are excited to partner with a prestigious slate of presenters who bring a wealth of knowledge to the field. It is our hope that their expertise will provide you with incredible opportunities to grow your knowledge base and skills to better serve ALL children in Mississippi. We are excited to learn alongside you during the conference.

I would like to take this opportunity to commend each of you for your dedication and perseverance during a year of tremendous change and uncertainty. You have been the constant in children's lives when everything around them seemed turbulent. Never underestimate the incredible impact you have on children and families. Your hard work, determination, and relentless pursuit of excellence will have an impact on children, communities, and our state for generations to come.

On behalf of the entire MS-CEC Board, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks for the work you do each and every day. You are the backbone of education for children in Mississippi and we believe wholeheartedly in you. We urge you to run this race with endurance firmly rooted in your passion for educating children. We are cheering you on moment by moment knowing that our students' futures are in good hands.

Sincerely,



Jennifer L. Boykin

# 2022 Virtual Conference Program

## MS CEC 2022 Executive Board



### **Mark Yeager, Past-President**

Dr. Mark Yeager has been in service to people with autism spectrum disorders and other intellectual and developmental disabilities since 1975. His experiences range from being a classroom teacher to program developer creating new and innovative community-based programs. Dr. Yeager is considered the foremost authority on autism spectrum disorders in the State of Mississippi. He has dedicated his professional career to advocacy and leadership in this field. His contributions are not limited to Mississippi. He is the author of the Autism Bill of Rights. This document guides the service delivery system outlining the obligations we all have in serving individuals with autism spectrum disorders. Dr. Yeager earned his Doctoral Degree from the University of Southern Mississippi. He both developed and taught the first classes solely dedicated to the topic of autism spectrum disorders at any Mississippi institution of higher learning. His

teachings are greatly sought after and include a lecture series provided to the Minister of Education of India as well as a guest lecturer in England. In addition to his many lecture offerings and presentations, Dr. Yeager is well published in several languages and consults with schools, universities and other autism programs across the United States.

Dr. Yeager is currently the Department Chair for Special Education at William Carey University. He also serves as the Executive Director of TEAAM Autism. TEAAM Autism's main offices are located at The Center Ridge Outpost, the organizations adventure base camp that is the home of one-of-a-kind adventure-based programs of which Dr. Yeager is the Founder.



### **Jennifer Boykin, President**

Jennifer L. Boykin, Ed. D. is Project Manager and Special Supports Lead for Bailey Education Group where her areas of expertise include special education, social emotional learning, Multitiered Systems of Support (MTSS), classroom management and behavior, policy and procedure, and early childhood. In addition, she is Assistant Professor of Education at William Carey University where she teaches graduate level education courses and supervises alternate route interns in the field. Having served in public education for 17 years, she began her career as a special education teacher for elementary students with moderate to severe disabilities and has taught students with mild to moderate disabilities at

the middle school level. She began her educational leadership experience as Special Education Case Manager and Section 504 Coordinator. She has served as Director of Special Services for Pearl Public School District for 6 years. She earned her Bachelor of Arts in Education from Millsaps College and her Specialist and Doctorate in Education from William Carey University. She values involvement in vocational organizations as a vehicle for continuous professional improvement. As such, she currently serves as President for the Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children and President Emeritus of the Mississippi Council for Administrators of Special Education (MS-CASE). She is a member of Crossgates Baptist Church where she is a member of the Crossgates Praise Team and Worship Choir. She lives in Pearl, Mississippi with her husband, Justin, and their two children.



### **Julie Etheridge, President-Elect**

Julie Etheridge is the Director of Special Services for the Walthall County School District in Tylertown Mississippi. She earned a bachelor's degree in special education, mild/moderate disabilities from University of Southern Mississippi in December of 1991 with 12 emphasis hours through the University Affiliated Programs (now the Institute for Disabilities Studies) in early intervention. Julie began working in January 1992 for the Covington County School District where she planned and implemented the special education preschool program for the county and then served as the teacher of the first Developmentally Delayed classroom at Collins Elementary School. She earned her Master's degree from USM in special education, severe/profound disabilities in 1992, and began her career in the Walthall County School District in 1993. Julie served as a special education teacher for

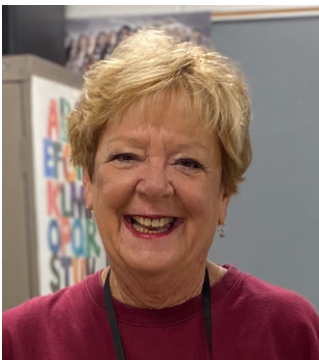
community-based preschool, homebound/hospital, and first grade resource and self-contained. She served as Case Manager for Special Services before earning administrator licensure and becoming Director of Special Services in 2012. Julie currently serves in her community as a Youth Intervention Court team member and a Coalition for Healthy Adolescent Programs and Services (CHAPS) team member and former president. She is a member of Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE) and the Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE). Additionally, she is currently serving on the Special Education Teacher Shortages Workgroup partnering with MDE, CEEDAR, and other directors across the state to support the retention and recruitment of quality special education teachers in Mississippi.



### **Michelle McClain, Vice-President**

Michelle McClain is the Behavior Support Specialist at Pearl Public School District for Special Services grades K-8. Michelle develops Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans, provides training to faculty, staff, and parents on implementation of the BIP, and provides services and supports to students with an Individualized Education Plan. Michelle's tasks also include providing behavioral supports to students with sensory regulation/stimulation needs, for Social Emotional Learning Skills, and supports for students that are in alternative school placement. For the 20/21 school year, she provided academic services virtually to K-12<sup>th</sup> grade self-contained students. Michelle spent five years as a self-contained special education teacher at Upper Elementary. She then taught the alternative

school/behavior classroom students K-12 for Pearl Public School District. Michelle presented in one of the concurrent sessions at the 2019 CEC Team Up to Build Up Fall Conference in Hattiesburg. Michelle received her Education Specialist Degree in Emotional Behavioral Disorder from William Carey University in November 2019, Master's Degree in Elementary Education from Delta State University in 2010, and Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2005. Working with autistic students and students with an Emotional Behavioral Disorder has become her passion for teaching. She believes that while not all students will take that adventure to college; it is her hope with the knowledge she gives them, they will be successful in life.



### **Carol Ann Franklin, Treasurer**

Carol Ann Franklin presently teaches special education in the Clinton Public School District where she has been employed since 1975. She received her undergraduate degree from Mississippi State University in 1975, and her Master's degree from Mississippi State in 1978. She earned National Board Certification in the area of Exceptional Needs in 2000. She was recognized as Teacher of the Year at Clinton Junior High School in 2003, 2015, and 2021. Carol Ann has been a member of CEC for numerous years and has held the office of treasurer for the past fifteen years.



### **Gretchen Cagle, Secretary**

Gretchen Cagle serves as the Special Education Head Coach for Bailey Education Group. She has 25 years of experience in the field of special education including serving as the State Director of Special Education for the Mississippi Department of Education. She began her career teaching students with significant disabilities at Hudspeth Regional Center in Whitfield. She attended the acclaimed Peabody College at Vanderbilt University in Nashville where she worked as a graduate assistant and research assistant on a Peer Buddy research project and was published as a result of her contributions to the project. Upon completion of her master's degree in special education for students with severe disabilities, she worked in the field of assistive technology and augmentative communication as the regional representative for the

Prentke Romich company and as the Assistive Technology Unit (ATU) Facilitator at Hudspeth Regional Center. She left Hudspeth's ATU to become the director of training for Parent Partners, a non-profit organization that oversaw the parent training and information center grant from the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Special Education Programs. There she worked with parents of students with disabilities, training on the principles of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) and advocacy techniques to use in working with school districts. During this time, she completed coursework to obtain a license in psychometry and went to work for the Rankin County School District as assistant director of special education. Her duties included working with the statewide assessment system, running the extended school year program, conflict resolution, and a variety of other administrative functions. After eight years with Rankin County, she was selected as an Educator in Residence in the Office of Student Assessment at Mississippi Department of Education prior to her appointment as State Director of Special Education.



### **Bobby Richardson, CEC Divisions Coordinator/CAN Coordinator**

Bobby L. Richardson is the Director of IDEA Fiscal Supports and Special Projects in the Office of Special Education at the Mississippi Department of Education. In his current role, he provides professional development, technical assistance, and coaching to special education directors and teachers around allowable use of funds, IDEA funding applications, alternate diploma, and assists with the implementation of the fiscal monitoring procedures and protocols. Bobby has a master's degree in Education Leadership and Administration and serves on the Board of Directors for

the Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children (MS CEC). He is a member of the Council for Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) – Assessment, Standards, & Education for Students with Disabilities (ASES) Steering Committee, and Mississippi Professional Educators (MPE). Bobby is actively involved in the National Center for Systemic Improvement (NCSI) Collaboratives, the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, & Reform (CEEDAR) Teaching and Leading Solutions Group (TLSG) – Educator Recruitment and Retention, and the National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) 1% Community of Practice Workgroup. Mr. Richardson has twenty-two years of experience educating and advocating for today's youth through service as a general education teacher, a special education teacher, and through his work at the State Department of Education.





### **Debbie Hubbert, Membership, Grants and Awards Coordinator**

Mrs. Hubbert earned her Master of Education from Georgia State University, Atlanta, GA. She received certifications in numerous areas of Special Education in the state of Georgia, Ohio, and Mississippi. She received her Bachelor's degree from the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL. As a Special Education teacher, she has proven her skills in the classroom as a valuable instructor; her success is evident in the repeated progress she accomplishes in working with children of various rulings.

## **Special Thanks to the Sponsors for the 2022 Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children Virtual Conference**

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Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children Website

<https://mississippi.exceptionalchildren.org/>

# 2022 Virtual Conference Program

## Keynote Speaker

### Keynote Speaker – Dr. Michael J. Kennedy



Michael J. Kennedy is an Associate Professor of Special Education in the School of Education and Human Development at the University of Virginia. He is the head of the STORMED Lab (Supporting Teachers through cOaching, obseRvations, and Multimedia to Educate students with Disabilities) please visit: <https://education.virginia.edu/faculty-research/centers-labs-projects/research-labs/stormed-lab>. Before completing his Ph.D. at the University of Kansas, he was a high school special education teacher for six years and an elementary level teacher for three years. Kennedy's main area of research is the design, implementation, and experimental testing of multimedia-based interventions to support pre- and in-service teachers' knowledge and implementation of evidence-based practices. Kennedy has published over 60 peer-reviewed articles, and managed over 12 million dollars in external grant funding. He is Co-Editor of *Journal of Special Education Technology* and a member of U.Va's Faculty Senate. Kennedy was awarded the 2021 TED/Pearson Excellence in Teacher Education Award, and U.Va's Alumni Board of Trustees Award for excellence in university teaching in 2015.



# 2022 Virtual Conference Program

## Session Descriptions & Presenters

### Keynote

#### **HLPs as Catalyst: We Can Do Better Than Remediation**

**Presenter:** Dr. Michael J. Kennedy

In this keynote, Dr. Michael Kennedy from the University of Virginia will highlight key high-leverage practices that can support educators' individual and collective efforts to accelerate performance of students with disabilities. Drawing from the collaboration, assessment, social/behavioral, and instruction domains, Dr. Kennedy will focus his message around ways to combine practices in novel ways to do more than simply "get by" or remediate student performance.

### Concurrent Sessions

#### **What's Your Why? (1A)**

**Presenter:** Denise Harrison

The focus of this session will encourage teachers and administrators as you continue educating students and supporting families. We will take a trip down memory lane to uncover our passion for education that may have been buried during the pandemic.

#### **Caregiver Collaboration (1B)**

**Presenter:** Alicia Balfrey, M.S.

Research has shown that collaborating with families results in positive learning outcomes for students, and the challenges we faced during the 2020-21 school year underscored this need more than ever. In this session, we will discuss strategies for thoughtfully engaging families and coaching caregivers to address their child's unique needs. Participants will learn how to apply principles of adult learning when coaching families to use evidence-based interventions with their children, as well as how to increase positive caregiver-child interactions to promote learning and development. Demonstrations on how to apply these principles in face-to-face and virtual situations are included.

#### **Addressing SEL through Identification, Implementation, & Trauma-Informed Practices (1C)**

**Presenter:** Kasey Keith, REACH MS

This session will discuss the impact of trauma on students' behavior and well-being. It will also highlight how trauma can affect teachers and the importance of self-care strategies. Content will focus on identifying behavioral responses to trauma and implementing SEL practices to support all students.

## **Path to Inclusion (2A)**

**Presenters:** Christy Hunt & Ginger Koestler

This session will focus on creating a path to inclusion that provides options for students who learn differently. District and building leaders will navigate the multifaceted challenges behind designing, planning, and implementing a vision of inclusion in education. Inclusion is a path, not a destination.

## **Universal Design for Learning Strategy Cards (2B)**

**Presenter:** Paige Davis

The Universal Design for Learning Framework Strategy Cards are interactive infographics that describe the what, why, and how of UDL implementation. The UDL Strategy Cards are a free tool to promote equitable, accessible, and student-centered educational learning environments to all students and to decrease the achievement gap among various student subgroups. Teachers and administrators can use the UDL Strategy Cards to formulate feedback and generate clear, specific, and actionable steps to improve practice when engaged in the observation and feedback cycles of the Mississippi Professional Growth System. They can also be used by Educator Preparation Programs for use in pre-service programs to demonstrate the concepts of and ways to implement Universal Design for Learning.

## **Using Avatars to Promote an SEL Environment (2C)**

**Presenters:** Chris Dudick & Emily Preisler

Running out of creative ideas for engaging students? Know your students love video games? We have just the trick to enhance social emotional learning in your classroom. Join Plainfield Public Schools and SiLAS to learn the research behind game-based learning and how we've used that knowledge to create virtual worlds that get students' attention and keep them engaged. Level up your classroom with SiLAS' universal screening tool, tiered lesson plans, and avatars.

## **Using Visuals to Support the Academic & Behavioral Needs of Students with Significant Disabilities (3A)**

**Presenters:** Dr. Brittany Herrington

Join us for this session on visuals. We will discuss multiple routines and activities of the school day where visuals will help students with significant disabilities have a better understanding of the routine and how to successfully complete it. Think navigation, directions, classroom order, reading, etc. Participants will be able to view visuals as well as receive visual templates that they can edit for their own use.

## **LRE-Find ME!! Understanding the Role of Inclusion in Today's Classroom (3B)**

**Presenter:** Allison Oliver

Upon completing this session, teachers and public school stakeholders will understand the importance of ensuring the appropriate placements are being assessed and considered when programming for students with disabilities. Additionally, this session will provide resources to identify positive examples of school climate factors, practices, programs and strategies associated with inclusion to increase collaboration and ultimately lead students to being placed in their true least restrictive environments.



## **Special Education Updates and Best Practices (3C)**

**Presenter:** Dr. Mitzi Moore

Special education updates, ideas, and best practices to help create learning LEAPS!

## **Promoting Independence with Assistive Technology (4A)**

**Presenter:** Paula Johnson & Dianne Enis

Assistive technology promotes greater independence. It can enable students to perform tasks they were formerly unable to accomplish without assistance from others. Technology can be used with students to enhance their reading, writing, and math skills. Assistive technology can be used to enable students to communicate their wants, needs, ideas, and desires. It can also be the bridge to social communication and the ability to participate in social interactions. Assistive technology enhances the methods of learning, communicating, and interacting.

## **Kurzweil 3000 Can Help Build Strong Readers and Writers (4B)**

**Presenter:** Missy Tatum, LOTR, ATP

Kurzweil 3000 is a text-to-speech literacy technology that supports reading, writing, learning and test-taking. Students with complex learning needs can access a wide range of learning tools including talking dictionaries, highlighters, notes, graphic organizers, audible spell check, word prediction and more. Kurzweil 3000 makes all content accessible anytime, anywhere. This session will provide an overview of this comprehensive literacy and learning technology.

## **Presenters**

### **Alicia Balfrey**

Alicia Balfrey resides in Eugene, OR and is an autism training specialist with STAR Autism Support. She provides workshops, coaching, and consultation to classrooms across the United States and internationally, supporting their implementation of evidence-based strategies. Alicia also enjoys providing training and support to families of students with autism. Prior to her role at STAR, Alicia taught an ECSE classroom for preschoolers with autism, serving as a training site to model evidence-based strategies for other educational teams around the state of Oregon. She received her master's in early intervention/early childhood special education from the University of Oregon. Alicia also helps to facilitate STAR Autism Support's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee.

### **Paige Davis**

Paige Davis, M.Ed., earned a B.A. in English and an M.Ed. in Special Education from the University of Southern Mississippi, and has worked in education for over twenty years. She has knowledge and experience in the areas of literacy, autism, multi-tiered systems for support (MTSS), and special education. She taught students with disabilities in classrooms and in community-based settings for thirteen years and has served in leadership positions for six years. Paige has provided leadership support as a District Special Services Case Manager, a SSIP Literacy Coach, and is currently a Universal Design for Learning Specialist with REACH MS, providing professional development and technical support to administrators, teachers, and support personnel throughout Mississippi.

### **Chris Dudick**

Chris is an Emmy award-winning producer, educator and entrepreneur. Chris's passion for education and animation led him to develop SiLAS, a game-based Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) platform. SiLAS is revolutionizing the landscape of SEL through our simple four step process; Screen, Teach, Create & Assess. Students use our movie making technology to actively practice social emotional skills in any learning environment on any device. In collaboration with our partners, SiLAS is looking to effectively identify areas of social emotional deficits in students and provide teachers the tools to efficiently implement.

### **Dianne Enis**

Dianne Enis is a school psychologist providing comprehensive evaluations for student in all areas of disability especially in Autism, emotional disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury, and other low incident disabilities. She conducts Functional Behavioral Assessments, develops Behavior Intervention Plans and provides training related to IDEA regulations and MDE Policies.

### **Denise Harrison**

Denise Harrison is a Special Education Professional Development Coordinator with the Mississippi Department of Education-Office of Special Education, along with the Office of Professional Development and the University of Mississippi. She has been in the field of education for over 20 years. Thirteen of those years, Denise taught students with significant cognitive deficits. Denise earned her Master of Education degree in Special Education from Arkansas State University. She received her National Board Certification in 2011. Denise is pursuing her Doctor of Philosophy degree in Special Education from the University of Mississippi.

### **Dr. Brittany Herrington**

Dr. Brittany Herrington received her master's degree in early intervention and her doctoral degree in special education with an emphasis in severe/low incidence disabilities at the University of Southern Mississippi. Brittany earned a second master's degree in P-12 educational administration and supervision. She has previously served as a classroom teacher for self-contained special education and an early intervention provider with the First Steps. During her employment at the Mississippi Department of Education, Brittany was the early childhood special education coordinator and provided technical assistance to districts and schools for their special education pre-k and significant cognitive disability elementary programming. She currently works for *Realizing Excellence for ALL Children in Mississippi* (REACH MS) as the Assistant Director. Her focus at REACH MS is on supporting district-wide implementation of behavior, social-emotional learning and academics with SCD and early childhood populations. Brittany also adjuncts in special education for the University of Southern Mississippi.

### **Christy Hunt**

Before starting with the University of Mississippi and Mississippi Department of Education as a professional development coordinator, Christy worked twenty-years as a teacher, counselor, and advocate for individuals with disabilities. After a successful career helping students and adults with disabilities succeed in school and the workforce through the implementation of inclusive practices, now training educational leaders and teachers to integrate equity-based inclusive practices connected to improved student outcomes.

### **Paula Johnson**

Paula Johnson is a speech pathologist offering services to districts in evaluations of students, Head Start screenings, mass screenings, consultation, and professional development. Ms. Johnson conducts onsite assistive technology evaluations for districts. She has experience working in public schools and provides supports to teachers and speech pathologists in using assistive technology.

### **Kasey Keith**

Kasey Keith is a PBIS Specialist for the Mississippi State Personnel Development Grant, REACH MS (Realizing Excellence for All Children in Mississippi), which provides professional development, training and technical assistance, to schools and districts regarding Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), and Universal Design for Learning (UDL) across the state. Prior to working with REACH MS, she was a K-8 school counselor, Support Specialist for an AmeriCorps literacy tutoring program, and a special education instructional assistant. Ms. Keith has her Mississippi teaching licensure for Mild/Moderate Disabilities and Guidance Counseling. She holds a Specialist degree in Special Education and BA in Psychology from the University of Southern Mississippi and a

Master's degree in School Counseling from William Carey University. She is currently working toward her PhD in Special Education at the University of Southern Mississippi.

### **Ginger Koestler**

Ginger Koestler is the Director Academic and Behavioral Outcomes for Students with Disabilities with the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Special Education. Ginger has been with the MDE for six years and works with school districts, teachers, and families to provide academic and behavior supports for students with disabilities. Ginger is also MDE's 504 contact. Before coming to the Department, Ginger was a special education teacher serving self-contained, resource, and tutorial students with disabilities at the elementary and middle school levels. Ginger graduated from Delta State University with both a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology (minor in Special Education) and Master of Education in Special Education. She received her Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership from Belhaven University, where she is also currently pursuing her Doctoral Degree in Educational Leadership.

### **Dr. Mitzi Moore**

Dr. Mitzi Moore received her B.S. in Special Education from Mississippi State University, her M.Ed. from The University of Mississippi, and her Ph.D. from the University of Southern Mississippi. She has 26 years of experience as a Mississippi teacher, principal and central office administrator. Dr. Moore received the MS Association Partners in Education Governor's Award and MS Value Added Preps Award. She is certified in Mild Moderate Disabilities, Elementary Education, and Administration. She is currently with The Excellence Group, LLC.

### **Allison Oliver**

Allison currently holds a Specialist Degree in Educational Leadership and is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Mississippi in the Department of Special Education. Allison is a Positive Behavioral Specialist for DeSoto County Schools and an Adjunct Instructor for the University of Mississippi. She has over 15 years of experience in public education and is an advocate for students of all abilities. Allison has been awarded many honorariums, grants, and scholarships for her dedication, innovation, and advocacy in the field.

### **Emily Preisler**

Emily has varied experiences teaching elementary students for more than a decade. She specializes in Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, Response to Intervention, and focusing on solutions when considering how districts begin to implement new processes to meet the needs of all children. Emily earned her masters degree in Educational Psychology from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she learned how to use data in ways that support socially just and equitable education for students from diverse backgrounds.

### **Missy Tatum**

Missy Tatum is a Kurzweil Education Representative for Audio Optical Systems of Austin, a Kurzweil Business Partner. She's been working with Audio Optical Systems and Kurzweil since 2007. Kurzweil 3000 is a web-based, text-to-speech learning tool that supports students with learning differences. In her "previous life," Missy provided Occupational Therapy and Assistive Technology Services in public schools for over 18 years and worked with diverse learners with a wide range of challenges.



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