

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 the State Director of Special Education for the Mississippi Department of Education. 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.



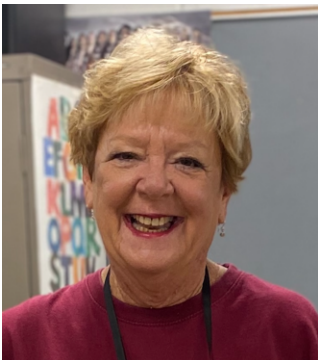
Julie Etheridge, President-Elect

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 currently the Behavior Intervention Specialist for Intervention Services in the Office of Elementary Education and Reading at the MS Department of Education. Prior to this school year, she served as Behavior Support Specialist at Pearl Public School District for Special Services grades K-8. In that position, Michelle developed Functional Behavioral Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans, provided training to faculty, staff, and parents on implementation of the BIP, and provided services and supports to students with an Individualized Education Plan. Michelle's tasks also included providing behavioral supports to students with sensory regulation/stimulation needs, for Social Emotional Learning Skills, and supports for students in alternative school placement. For the 20/21 school year, she provided academic services virtually to K-12th 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 is the Special Education Director for Rankin County School District. Previously, she served 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.

Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children Website

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



Council for
Exceptional
Children

MISSISSIPPI