

The Center for Exceptional Children  
OF  
Mississippi  
PRESENTS

**EVERY STUDENT  
MATTERS!!**  
**EVERY STUDENT IS  
EXCEPTIONAL!!**

2023 FALL CONFERENCE

August 28-30, 2023

*Cadence Bank Conference Center & Arena*  
Tupelo, MS



Council for  
Exceptional  
Children

**MISSISSIPPI**

# Welcome to the 2023 CEC Conference



We are excited to welcome each of you to the 2023 Mississippi Council for Exceptional Children (MS-CEC) Conference here in Tupelo, Mississippi, a gathering where the shining minds of our industry assemble to share what they have learned since we last met. We are pleased to continue our partnership with our friends at the North Mississippi Education Consortium (NMEC) who have used their expertise to streamline this in-person event. We would like to thank the Mississippi Department of Education for providing volunteers and speakers that are experts in their fields.

We have planned a spectacular conference for you and have included sessions on topics that are impacting special education in our state. Take advantage of the information sessions, networking opportunities, and time to visit with vendors that are supporting MS CEC. We hope that you use this conference time to renew old friendships, and begin new ones, as well as to learn new strategies and skills to improve student outcomes.

Mississippi continues to deal with a significant teacher shortage, a mental health crisis, and substantial learning gaps across the state. In planning the conference **"Every Student Matters, Every Student is Exceptional!"** we wanted to take time to celebrate our teachers that work so hard every day for our students with disabilities. Our mission is to provide all in attendance with the most informative and entertaining experience possible.

We hope that you will get connected with CEC while at this conference. CEC is growing and we welcome new ideas and resources! We hope that you will take some time to learn more about CEC has to offer and consider joining a division. Division groups meet Wednesday morning from 8:30-9:15.

While you are here, I encourage you to experience the historic sites and landmarks of Tupelo, MS. I extend my sincerest gratitude for everyone investing their energy and creativity to provide a top-notch event for us to enjoy.

Sincerely,

*Michelle McClain*

Michelle McClain  
2022-2023 MS CEC  
President Elect

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# Event Schedule

## August 28

|                    |                              |         |
|--------------------|------------------------------|---------|
| 10:00 AM - 6:00 PM | Exhibitor Setup              | Lobby   |
| 12:00 PM - 1:00 PM | Participant Sign-in          | Lobby   |
| 1:00 PM - 2:15 PM  | Concurrent Session 1         | Various |
| 2:15 PM - 2:30 PM  | Snack Break/Visit w/ Vendors | Lobby   |
| 2:30 PM - 3:45 PM  | Concurrent Session 2         | Various |

## August 29

|                     |                               |                |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM   | Sign in/Continental Breakfast | Arena          |
| 8:30 AM - 10:30 AM  | Welcome/Keynote               | Cherry/Dogwood |
| 10:45 AM - 12:00 PM | Concurrent Session 3          | Various        |
| 12:00 PM - 1:30 PM  | Lunch and Guest Speaker       | Arena          |
| 1:30 PM - 2:45 PM   | Concurrent Session 4          | Various        |
| 2:45 PM - 3:00 PM   | Snack Break/Visit w/Vendors   | Lobby          |
| 3:00 PM - 4:15 PM   | Concurrent Session 5          | Various        |
| 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM  | Conference Social             | Lobby          |

## August 30

|                     |                                |                |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|----------------|
| 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM   | Sign in/Continental Breakfast  | Arena          |
| 8:30 AM - 9:15 AM   | CEC Special Interest Divisions | Various        |
| 9:30 AM - 10:45 AM  | Concurrent Session 6           | Various        |
| 10:45 AM - 11:00 AM | Break/Visit with Vendors       | Lobby          |
| 11:00 AM - 11:45 AM | Closing Keynote                | Cherry/Dogwood |
| 11:45 AM - 12:30 PM | Closing Session/Door Prizes    | Cherry/Dogwood |



# Featured Presenters



## **Roger Crawford**

Sports Illustrated has named Roger Crawford as "One of the most accomplished physically challenged athletes in the world." In recognition of his extraordinary athletic achievements, he was given the prestigious ITA Achievement Award, presented by the International Tennis Hall of Fame.

After realizing tremendous success on Center Court as a Division 1 athlete, he took his talents to Center Stage and is recognized as one of the world's top motivational speakers. Roger's transformational message gives organizations the ability to decrease excuses, increase results, and breakthrough self-imposed limitations. His remarkable life story is a powerful example that "challenges are inevitable, defeat is optional!" Roger is also a bestselling author whose books have been translated into 17 different languages. His most recent book, *Think To Win: The Power of Possibility Thinking* helps readers embrace success by thinking differently from those less successful. By developing the habit of possibility thinking, you are mentally prepared to tackle your next challenge and optimize your next opportunity.



## **Vivian O'Neal, Miss Mississippi 2023**

Vivian O'Neal is a 25-year-old native of Hattiesburg, Miss. She recently graduated with a Master of Education in Higher Education Administration from the University of Southern Mississippi, where she works as the Coordinator of Recruitment and Strategic Communication for the Honors College.

O'Neal's community service initiative is called CapABLE, in partnership with Mississippi public schools and the Mississippi Community College Board. CapABLE is a nonprofit organization that provides disability inclusion resources to educators. The collective is comprised of a series of five-day disability inclusion curricula, a children's book series, and a professional development seminar on inclusion for college students. The curricula have reached over 20,000 students, and over 1,000 educators and administrators across five states and the first children's book, "Josiah's Big Day!" has sold 200+ copies. She looks forward to continuing her work with CapABLE during her tenure as Miss Mississippi 2023 and long into the future.

<https://capablecurriculum.com/>



## **Karen Haase**

Karen Haase is a partner in the law firm of KSB School Law, where she focuses her practice exclusively on representing public school districts and related entities. She holds degrees from Hastings College, Kansas State University and the University of Nebraska College of Law. Prior to attending law school, Karen taught at both the high school and post-secondary level. Karen has been married to her high school sweetheart for 25 years and has two children.

# Breakout Sessions

## ***A Multifaceted Approach to Successful Behavioral Intervention at the High School Level: A Case Study***

*Presented by* Bettie Martinek and Mary Blount Chow

This session will review the case history and successful interventions implemented with a set of 16 year old fraternal twin males diagnosed with multiple behavioral and emotional disorders as well as family trauma. We will address the journey of the boys from fleeing a previous school setting, multiple school attendance in several states, consistent referrals to alternative schools along with a history of involvement with the juvenile justice system to finding success through a multifaceted approach of not only behavioral but also social and emotional interventions. This case study will demonstrate that when ALL aspects of people involved in the school setting work together, a difference can be made even at the high school level. It is never too late to begin an intervention.

## ***Access, Access, Access! A Review of the Access for All Guide 2.0***

*Presented by* Ginny Sanders

*This session provides participants an opportunity to explore the newly revised Access for All Guide 2.0.*

*Participants will:*

- *Examine the four types of adaptations included in the AFA Guide 2.0*
- *Explore adaptations and resources for select student populations*
- *Examine the six deficit areas included in the AFA Guide 2.0*

## ***Artful Literacy Centers™ to Meet the Needs of Every Child***

*Presented by* Amanda Koonlaba

The Artful Literacy Centers™, created by Amanda Koonlaba of Party in the Art Room, are a series of engaging activities designed to enhance literacy centers through the arts. These centers allow students to creatively explore language, build literacy skills, and develop their artistic abilities. These centers are grounded in educational research in literacy and arts integration, and each is foundational to differentiating for the needs of unique learners. The Artful Literacy Centers™ will be featured in an upcoming ASCD Educational Leadership Magazine article.

## ***Continuum Transition Planning and Services- The Earlier, the Better!***

*Presented by* Brooke Shoup

This session will discuss the importance of beginning the special education transition planning process as early as possible to allow time for planning and accessing the support services needed for the future. A continuum of transition services for all school ages (pre-k and up) will be shared, including a timeline of specific transition activities that can be initiated, and a general guideline for school personnel to follow in designing the transition plan for each student they support, no matter the age.

## ***District Level and School Frameworks for Supporting Students with Disabilities***

*Presented by Paige Pigott*

This session walks Special Services/Special Education Directors and principals with a toolbox to establish district level and school frameworks for supporting students with disabilities. Caseload management, student services scheduling, student class placements are just a few important aspects of establishing a workable framework. This session will take a deep dive into barriers which place limits on academic achievement for students with disabilities and give administrators a road map for ensuring that EVERY STUDENT MATTERS! EVERY STUDENT IS EXCEPTIONAL!

## ***Educational Disparities in Students with Sickle Cell Disease***

*Presented by Dereck Davis, MD., Mary Rankin, MEd, Allyn Anderson, MEd, & Cynthia Karlson, PhD.*

*Sickle cell disease (SCD) affects 1 in every 305 Black students in Mississippi. Approximately 30% of students with sickle cell disease have an educational disability. Thus, students with SCD struggle to meet age-appropriate academic benchmarks and frequently need special education services for support. The purposed symposium will describe (1) national and local educational disabilities observed in students with SCD, (2) describe critical gaps in educational milestones for students with SCD, (3) describe how student's medical condition impacts their educational environment, and (4) provide educators with practical recommendations to help these students be successful.*

## ***Empowering Exceptional Children through the Arts***

*Presented by Limeul Eubanks*

Arts education offers a wide range of benefits for exceptional children, including those with special needs or disabilities. Offering all students opportunities to grow, learn, and thrive in various aspects of their lives. It enables them to find their voice, build connections, and discover their strengths, contributing to their overall happiness and well-being.

Session Objectives:

- Understand the benefits of arts education and the positive impact of arts interventions on the development of exceptional children.
- Recognize the importance of creating inclusive Arts spaces to ensure all exceptional children can participate and thrive.
- Gain insights into the role of arts in enhancing creativity, self-expression, communication, and social skills in exceptional children.

## ***Establishing and Maintaining Equity and Inclusion in Educational Practices***

*Presented by Erin Hendricks*

In this session participants will establish their current practices around equity and inclusion. This session will explore ways to expand on opportunities for inclusion to increase student's time in their least restrictive environment as well as provide participants an opportunity to create an individualized plan for increasing the equitable practices within their classroom.

### ***Exploring the Multifaceted Uses of AI***

*Presented by Ashley Chism, Gretchen Cagle, Bobby Richardson*

In this presentation, we will explore how advanced Artificial Intelligence language models are being utilized across industries and contexts, revolutionizing the way we communicate, learn, and create. From its role in education and content generation to programming assistance and customer support, we'll uncover the many ways in which AI is making an impact.

### ***Getting the 3E's back into your classroom: Encouragement, Empowerment, and Excellence***

*Presented by Dr. Tracy Shells*

*Why do schools need training on classroom management?*

*Schools need our discipline program because it provides foundational strategies in classroom management for teachers to utilize to meet their students where they are and create a culture for them to succeed. Classroom management is imperative because it fosters an environment of expectations for proper behaviors to ensure successful teaching and learning in the classroom. Behavior problems hinder instruction and learning, produces frustration, costs billions of dollars, and diminishes student success. Get encouraged, empowered, and bring excellence back into your classroom by implementing our discipline program - "Time to Teach". By using our REFOCUS strategies, you will improve discipline, academic performance, staff morale, school climate, as well as reduce teacher stress and student failure. Our program can help you achieve a better teaching experience by showing you how to teach to expectations.*

### ***High Expectations: Seeing Past the Disability to Enrich the Possibility***

*Presented by Ellen Hill*

This presentation would be about setting high expectations for students with disabilities to help them reach their full potential. It will focus on looking to the abilities of the student to push them have successful outcomes in the classroom, in the community and in life. The session will cover using interest inventories, data and student input to drive instruction and IEP goals that will set the standard for student learning and success. There will be several opportunities for participants to engage in discussions and activities within the session. Testimonials of setting high expectations and reaching goals will be included as encouragement for participants to never give up, even when others do not believe success is attainable. The conclusion of the High Expectations session will provide time for questions, answers and participant testimonials of success they have had when working with students with disabilities.

### ***How we raised our SPED Graduation rate from 53.4% to 97.3%***

*Presented by Erin Jostes*

The changes that Pearl High School made within their Special Education Department, specifically Inclusion, that raised the graduation rate from 53.4% to 97.3%.

### ***Internalizing the IEP Process***

*Presented by Dr. Noleen Clark*

When you can write an IEP for the improvement of any concept or area, you have truly internalized the process and gained a deeper understanding and connection that will result into more effective and compliant IEPs being developed that appropriately meets the needs of students. While engaging in activities and examples, this session will also provide an overview of guidance to help educators understand the IEP components and best practices for the IEP development process.

### ***Introduction to Structured Teaching for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities.***

*Presented by Paige Pigott*

*Introduction to Structured Teaching for Students with Significant Cognitive Disabilities details basic classroom structure for setting a classroom up for success with center based teaching and individual schedules to detail through visual aides where students should be, what they should be doing, and for how long they will be doing specific activities. This structure is the foundation prior to implementing other researched based interventions such as ABA and assists teachers when working with a variety of grade levels and functioning levels on opportunities to differentiate instruction by teaching students independent centers that enable the teacher to teach small group and individual sessions.*

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### ***K-12: Southern dialects and students' writing***

*Presented by Svjetlana Curcic and Sara Platt*

With an increased focus on writing in the Mississippi College and Career Readiness Standards/Common Core State Standards (Shanahan, 2015), we analyzed a corpus of 231 pieces of student writing in our state. A number of researchers examined the associations between the children's use of dialects and their achievement in word reading, decoding, vocabulary, phonological awareness, comprehension, and composition, often indicating a negative correlation (Charity, Scarborough, & Griffin, 2004; Fogel & Ehri, 2000; Patton Terry & McDonald Connor, 2012; Patton Terry, McDonald Connor, Petscher, & Ross Conlin, 2012). Fewer studies examined the relationship between dialects and students' writing. We analyzed third and fourth grade students' writing, with a specific focus on Southern dialects.

### ***MDR at a Glance***

*Presented by Dr. Sarieta Holmes Pollard*

*In this session, we will discuss the Manifestation Determination Review process at a glance.*

### ***Multi-tiered Systems of Supports: Supporting ALL Learners***

*Presented by Mathis Sheriff and Sandra Elliott*

This presentation will give a clear definition of MTSS along with its various components, elaborating on how ALL students are supported through a three-tiered model. We will also discuss strategies for supporting learners at each tier, leadership roles and responsibilities, as well as scheduling.

### ***Preparing Your Exceptional Student Using Financial Literacy***

*Presented by Kristi James*

*Middle and High School educators will learn about resources, programs and trainings available from the Mississippi Council on Economic Education. This session introduces special education teachers to available programs that will equip them to ensure their students learn important financial literacy concepts to help prepare them for life after high school. Programs to be discussed are:*

- Danny Dollar: Make Your Own Money
- Master Teacher of Career Readiness
- Pathways to Entrepreneurship

### ***Progress Monitoring: NCII's New Guidelines for Measuring Growth on I***

*Presented by Classworks / Melissa Sinunu*

The requirements for measuring growth on Individualized Education Plans have changed since the Endrew F. Supreme Court case ruling. In December 2022, the National Center on Intensive Intervention revised their guidelines for Progress Monitoring. We'll discuss the expectations and how to make the shift to valid and reliable progress monitoring.

In this session, we will discuss how compliance needs have shifted and the use of Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) as indicators of general skill success can better reflect overall competence on an outcome while addressing many of the limitations of single-skill measures.

We will also demonstrate progress monitoring tools that are simple and efficient while more accurately describing students' growth and development across time.

We will outline ways to apply the guidelines in district, including:

- Today's expectations for measuring growth toward annual goals
- Five common mistakes people make when selecting a valid measure
- How to make the shift to compliant progress monitoring
- Making meaningful adjustments to student SDI after reviewing progress monitoring results.
- This improves student performance by helping teachers understand the new guidelines and implement them in the real world to help students grow.

### ***Promoting Math Equity: Unlocking Opportunities for All***

*Presented by Kandra Wilkins*

*In this engaging and thought-provoking session, we examine the critical topic of math equity and explore strategies to unlock opportunities for all students in mathematics.*

### ***Revive your Data by Reviving the Arts***

*Presented by Amanda Koonlaba*

Participants will learn how Mississippi Whole Schools is meeting the needs of diverse learners through arts integration. We will look at the data and discuss strategies for how to differentiate general education content using the four art forms.

### ***Self-Regulation Strategies for Breakthrough Learning***

*Presented by Shauna Hedgepath, Kayla Broome, Melisa Whitehead, RoboKind*

*Without self-regulation, learning cannot occur. How do you actively teach social skills and self-regulation in your classroom, school, or district? Have a tip to share? Here's the session to do it! Facilitated by experienced special educators and autism experts, this collaborative session is your opportunity to learn and share actionable, efficacy-based self-regulation strategies and discuss how we can use technology to better incorporate social lessons into everyday situations. An added plus, you can say you attended a session with a robot as a presenter!*

## ***SPED Legal Q & A***

*Presented by Kashonda Day, Adams & Reese Law Firm*

Do you have any burning Special Education legal questions? This is the session for you! Bring your questions and get the answers you need to be legally compliant in your classroom.

## ***Student Engagement: How Flexible are You?***

*Presented by Dr. LaShana Middleton*

*Universal Design for Learning is a framework that reduces barriers in instruction, proactively provides accommodations and supports, and allows for high-achievement expectations for all students.*

*This interactive session will feature flexible instructional methods and materials that incorporate universal strategies and supports to reach marginalized learners and increase student engagement during Tier 1 instruction.*

## ***Targeted Planning for Instruction***

*Presented by Christy Hunt*

When planning instruction for students with disabilities, teachers need to consider elements of explicit instruction that will provide access to the general education curriculum and meet the unique needs of students with disabilities across a variety of outcome areas. Come to the session to learn more about how to plan and develop effective instructional plans to guide your effective daily practices.

## ***Teaching Students Who Are Deaf or Hard of Hearing***

*Presented by Ashten Yost*

*This session provides an overview of hearing loss and discusses the ways hearing loss affects learning. This sessional also provides strategies and supports to use while teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

*Presentation Learning Objectives:*

- Identify causes, types, and degrees of hearing loss.*
- Recall the ways hearing loss affects learning.*
- Explore strategies and supports to use while teaching students who are deaf or hard of hearing.*

## ***Transitioning from School Year IEPs to Calendar Year IEPs: A Panel Discussion***

*Presented by Aletha Simpson*

This session will consist of a panel discussion of the calendar year IEP. The panel consists of special education directors and experienced special educators who have implemented calendar year IEPs's. You will hear tales from the trenches. This will be a great opportunity to learn from the experience of others.

***Understanding and Supporting Special Populations in Special Education: English Learners and Gifted Students***

*Presented by Sandra Elliott and Mathis Sheriff*

This session will focus on basic understanding of English learners and gifted students, appropriate steps for identification of these special populations of students for special education as well as appropriate classroom supports.

***Using the Mississippi Teacher Resource Guides to Plan Engaging Instructional Centers***

*Presented by Denise Harrison*

*Participants will experience hands-on activities that provide strategies for creating and implementing centers for the special education classroom as it relates to the alternate standards.*

***Visual Math for Unique Learners: Scaffolding Supports for Regrouping Multi-Digit Addition/Subtraction***

*Presented by Kimberly Price*

This session will focus on helping educators use the concrete, pictorial, abstract (C-P-A) instructional approach to scaffold the process of regrouping in multi-digit addition/subtraction using a unique place value frame. We will examine how to use this frame to help students visualize, conceptualize, and make connections to abstract algorithms.