



## Welcome!

On behalf of the Mississippi Department of Education and its co-sponsor Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center, we welcome you to the annual Building Partnerships...Working Together Mississippi Parent Conference. We have planned an exciting conference that we hope will be both educational and interesting.

We would like to thank our sponsors and exhibitors who have helped make this conference possible. Many individuals have dedicated time and effort to ensure the success of this important event. Please make time today to meet with each one and acknowledge their commitment to our students and parents. Multiple agencies, individuals, and resources contribute to the daily success of our students. Continuous collaborative partnership efforts enable our students to make seamless transition as they exit school and enter college and or careers as adults. Thank you for being a part of this exciting experience.

## SPONSORS



*Office of Special Education*

**MISSISSIPPI PARENT TRAINING  
AND INFORMATION CENTER**

# AGENDA

Thursday, October 17, 2019

## DAY ONE

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.	Conference Registration
9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Introduction of Speaker</b> <i>Windsor I and II</i> <b>ROBIN LEMONIS</b>   State Director <i>Mississippi Department of Education</i>  <b>PAM DOLLAR</b>   Executive Director <i>Mississippi Parent Training and Information Center</i>
9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> <b>KERRY MAGRO</b>   Keynote Speaker “Defining Special Needs: From Nonverbal to Professional Speaker”
10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1</b>
11:45 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
1:30 p.m. - 2:45 p.m.	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2</b>
2:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Break
3:00 p.m. - 4:15 p.m.	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3</b>

<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1</b> 10:30am-11:45am	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2</b> 1:30pm-2:45pm	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3</b> 3:00pm-4:15pm
<b>Social Skills: Strategies for Exceptional Learners</b> Presenters: Denise Harrison Facilitator: Yolonda Ray <i>Windsor III</i>	<b>Transition, Empowerment, and Financial Resources</b> Presenter: Kevin Bishop, Chris Howard, and Billy Taylor Facilitator: Nellie Alliston <i>Windsor III</i>	<b>Transition, Empowerment, and Financial Resources</b> Presenter: Kevin Bishop, Chris Howard, and Billy Taylor Facilitator: Gloria Lacey <i>Windsor III</i>
<b>Education Scholarship Account</b> Presenters: Jaecelyn Armstrong Facilitator: Rhonda Douglas <i>Windsor IV and V</i>	<b>Education Scholarship Account / ESA</b> Presenters: Jaecelyn Armstrong Facilitator: Veronica Bolls <i>Windsor IV and V</i>	<b>Kids with Grit: An Interactive Family Engagement Workshop</b> Presenter: Jillian Smart Facilitator: Christopher Brooks <i>Windsor IV and V</i>
<b>Mississippi Family Engagement Framework and Toolkit</b> Presenter: Amanda Adams and Angela Towers Facilitator: Leslie Junkin <i>Churchill I and II</i>	<b>Making Adjustments at Home: Helping Your Young Child Meet the Standards</b> Presenters: Candice Taylor Facilitator: Minnia Winters <i>Churchill I and II</i>	<b>Procedural Safeguards</b> Presenter: Mona Spells Adou Facilitator: Roscoe Jones <i>Churchill I and II</i>
<b>Home and Community Based Services for Persons with ID/DD and Autism</b> Presenter: Jennifer Fulcher and Betty Pinion Facilitator: Jennifer Johnson <i>Winston I and II</i>	<b>How to Succeed in School with a Disability</b> Presenters: Kerry Magro Facilitator: Karen Goodman <i>Winston I and II</i>	



## Kerry Magro

### KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Kerry Magro is an award-winning national speaker who is on the autism spectrum. A recent master's graduate from Seton Hall University, he is CEO and Founder of KFM Making a Difference, a non-profit corporation focused on disability advocacy and housing. Mr. Magro, a professional member of the National Speakers Association, has spoken at more than 400 venues across the country and Canada since starting college in 2007. One of his recent accomplishments was consulting for the 2012 motion picture hit "Joyful Noise" starring Queen Latifah and Dolly Parton. The film earned over 30 million dollars in theaters worldwide! Mr. Magro has consulted for two more films established in 2015 including "Jane Wants a Boyfriend" and "Don't Foil My Plans."

# AGENDA

Friday, October 18, 2019  
DAY TWO

8:00 a.m. - 9:00 a.m.	Conference Registration
9:00 a.m. - 9:15 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Introduction of Speaker</b> <i>Windsor I and II</i> <b>ROBIN LEMONIS</b>   State Director <i>Mississippi Department of Education</i> <b>ARMERITA TELL</b>   Bureau Director <i>Mississippi Department of Education</i>
9:15 a.m. - 10:15 a.m.	<b>Keynote Speaker</b> <b>TOMMIE MABRY</b>   Keynote Speaker “Understanding Me Would Help You to Reach Me!”
10:15 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.	Break
10:30 a.m. - 11:45 a.m.	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1</b>
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<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 1</b> 10:30am-11:45am	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 2</b> 1:30pm-2:45pm	<b>CONCURRENT SESSIONS 3</b> 3:00pm-4:15pm
<b>Bullying: To Lead Him Out You Must Enter His World</b> Presenter: Tommie Mabry Facilitator: Minnia Winters <i>Windsor III</i>	<b>Skills for Effective Advocacy</b> Presenters: Pam Dollar and Leslie Junkin Facilitator: Rhonda Douglas <i>Windsor III</i>	<b>Social Skills: Strategies for Exceptional Learners</b> Presenter: Denise Harrison Facilitator: Roscoe Jones <i>Windsor III</i>
<b>Vroom! A Tool to Promote Brain Building at Home!</b> Presenters: Heather Martin Facilitator: Christopher Brooks <i>Windsor IV and V</i>	<b>IEP 101: What Every Parent Needs to Know</b> Presenter: Amy Shelly Facilitator: Veronica Bolls <i>Windsor IV and V</i>	<b>Making Adjustments at Home: Helping Your Young Child Meet the Standards</b> Presenters: Candice Taylor Facilitator: Jerrika Mabry <i>Windsor IV and V</i>
<b>The Vast World of Transition</b> Presenter: Tarea Stout Facilitator: Yolonda Ray <i>Churchill I and II</i>	<b>The Vast World of Transition</b> Presenter: Tarea Stout Facilitator: Nellie Alliston <i>Churchill I and II</i>	<b>Engaging Families as Partners</b> Presenter: Lakisha Jackson Facilitator: Karen Goodman <i>Churchill I and II</i>
<b>Dyslexia Awareness and Support</b> Presenters: Laurie Weathersby Facilitator: Gloria Lacey <i>Winston I and II</i>	<b>Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) and Meaningful Educational Benefit After Endrew F. Supreme Court Ruling</b> Presenter: Ann Moore Facilitator: Jennifer Johnson <i>Winston I and II</i>	



# Tommie Mabry

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Tommie Mabry is the founder of Tommie Mabry Company and Best-Selling Author of *A Dark Journey To a Light Future* and *If Tommie Can Do It, We Can Do It*. Tommie is striving to give educators and students a true look at many factors that daunts academic achievement. His platform tackles the experiences and challenges that at-risk students face in communities and educational environments. By focusing on real-life topics such as, bullying, life skills, classroom management and more, it gives students a positive outlook on teaching and learning and the ability to balance. As an advocate for education and student success, Mr. Mabry travels around the country encouraging educators to focus on the whole student and motivating youth to never give up on hope. The Tommie Mabry Company has touched many lives and opened doors for youth by acknowledging his personal struggles and demonstrating his success after graduating from Tougaloo College with a Master of Arts in Child Development and developing the Tommie Mabry Company.



# Presenter Biographies

**AMANDA ADAMS** is a South-Central Region Family Engagement Transition Coach for the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Child Life and her Master's Degree in Early Intervention from the University of Southern Mississippi. After spending 10 years as the early interventionist at Children's of Mississippi, Ms. Adams went on to be an early childhood classroom coach and evaluator. She lives in Jackson with her husband and two sons and serve on the Board of Directors for Children's Advocacy Centers of Mississippi.

**JAECelyn ARMSTRONG** currently serves as the Division Director of the Educational Scholarship Account (ESA) for the Office of Special Education at the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE). Her responsibilities include administering the operations of the ESA. She has a Master's Degree in Secondary Education from Belhaven University and obtained a Bachelor's Degree in Special Education from Jackson State University. Her background includes years of experience teaching special needs students grades K-12. In addition to teaching, Ms. Armstrong served as a Special Education Coordinator, a Registered Behavior Technician and a Behavior Specialist. Ms. Armstrong has led multiple professional development sessions regarding instruction to special needs students in the general education classroom.

**KEVIN BISHOP** began his state service with the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services in 1990 as an Evaluator at Allied Enterprises of Monroe County. The following year, he transferred to the Evaluator position at Allied Enterprises of Laurel. In 1993, Mr. Bishop was promoted to Facility Manager at Allied Enterprises of Harrison County. During his time, he oversaw the development of multiple contracts including federal contracts through SourceAmerica, the construction of a new facility, and Hurricane Katrina. In 2006, Mr. Bishop was promoted to Regional Manager in South Mississippi overseeing the operations of all AbilityWorks Community Rehabilitation Programs (formally known as Allied Enterprises) and Vocational Rehabilitation activities. In 2018, Mr. Bishop was promoted to Director of Client Services, which he held until this year when he was promoted to Deputy Administrator of Workforce for MDRS. Mr. Bishop did his studies at the University of Southern Mississippi. He currently lives in Long Beach, MS with his wife Marsha and their three children.

**PAM DOLLAR** has advocated on a State and national level for improved services and programs for people with disabilities for nearly two decades. Ms. Dollar has served as Family Coordinator for Mississippi's State Professional Development Grant (REACH MS), Chairperson of the Mississippi Special Education Advisory Panel and was a member of the Mississippi Extended School Year Handbook Committee. Pam has served on numerous other boards,



committees, and task forces, in an effort to ensure that all individuals with disabilities succeed. She travels throughout the State speaking to various groups about Autism, special education and parental issues and concerns. Through her extensive involvement, she has helped improve services for individuals with disabilities and received numerous awards for her work. Most importantly, she is mom to Watson, an incredible young man who has Autism.

**JENNIFER FULCHER** is the Director of the Division of ID/DD Waiver with the Department of Mental Health. Ms. Fulcher has more than 18 years of experience including eight years in the ID/DD Waiver program. Ms. Fulcher served in several different roles during her seven years with the Division of Medicaid including providing oversight of the Bridge to Independence Program, which helped transition people from institutional programs to the community. She partnered with state agencies to develop state and federal policies in her role as Director of the Office of Community Based Services.

**DENISE HARRISON** is a Professional Development Coordinator with the University of Mississippi and the Mississippi Department of Education-Office of Special Education. She has seventeen years of experience teaching general education and special education preschool and elementary students. Thirteen of those years, Ms. Harrison taught students with significant cognitive deficits. Ms. Harrison earned her Master

of Education degree in Special Education from Arkansas State University. She received her National Board Certification in 2011.

**CHRIS HOWARD** serves the great State of Mississippi as Executive Director of the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, a position he has held since 2015. Mr. Howard has been with the agency since 2000, also serving in the capacities of Director of Internal Audit, Director of Financial Management and Deputy Executive Director. Prior to his career at MDRS, Mr. Howard served as a state auditor with the Office of the State Auditor for eight years. He is a graduate of Mississippi State University and holds a bachelor's degree in Accounting. Mr. Howard is a member of the Mississippi Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) Board and the Mississippi ABLE Board-dedicated to helping individuals with disabilities to establish tax-advantaged savings and investments.

**LAKISHA JACKSON** has a degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi College with endorsements in Music Education, Social Studies, and English. Ms. Jackson has over 10 years of teaching experience and serves as a member of the American Federation of Teachers. Ms. Jackson is currently a Music Teacher in the Hinds County School District.

**LESLIE JUNKIN** is an advocate for individuals with disabilities and their families for over 19 years, Ms. Junkin has presented extensively in the areas of IDEA, Transition from Part C to Part B, Advocacy

Skills, Parenting a Child with a Disability and presents Parent Advocacy Boot Camps around the state. She is the assistant director of the MS PTI and has been with them for 11 years. She has been a Parent Liaison with Early Intervention for 14 years. Ms. Junkin has served as a member of the MS Dept. of Education's Special Education Advisory Panel, Institute for Disability Studies Family to Family Advisory Committee, Ameri Corp member with LIFE and the Arc of MS; board member with the NE MS Down Syndrome Society and The Arc of Lowndes County. Ms. Junkin's most important job is being mom to, Isabella, her 20-year-old daughter that has Down syndrome and Type 1 diabetes.

**HEATHER MARTIN** has a degree in Psychology from Mississippi State University and a degree in Elementary Education from Blue Mountain College. Ms. Martin has 16 years of teaching experience with the Houston School District, where she was named Teacher of the Year multiple times. With her experience and passion for early childhood development, Ms. Martin is excited to communicate how the Vroom® initiative can give children a great start to life that puts them on a trajectory for a bright future. Heather works tirelessly sharing this inspiring initiative with community leaders, educators, healthcare professionals, and caregivers across the state of Mississippi.

**BETTY PINION** is a Licensed Social Worker with ten years (10) experience as a medical social worker and nineteen (19)

years of experience in working with persons with intellectual and developmental disabilities with the Department of Mental Health. She has worked with the DMH Bureau of Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities since 2012. Ms. Pinion is the Director for the IDD Community Support Program (1915i State Plan Amendment). She works closely with the Division of Medicaid in implementation of the IDD Community Support Program. She oversees all aspects of the IDD CSP including the development of standards, the enrollment process, technical assistance and training for certified service providers, and monitoring of programs.

**AMY SHELLY** is a Professional Development Coordinator who works with the Office of Instructional Support at the Mississippi Department of Education – Office of Special Education. She has twenty-two years of experience in teaching Special Education. The first twenty years she spent teaching grades 9-12. During that time, she taught components of the Mississippi Occupational Diploma, tutored and provided remediation for subject area assessments, and served as an inclusion teacher with Algebra I, English II, Biology, World History, and U.S. History. She also spent over a year as a fifth-grade inclusion teacher. Ms. Shelly graduated from Mississippi State University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and a Bachelor of Science in Special Education. She earned her Master of Education degree in Special Education with an emphasis in dual sensory impairment from the University of Southern Mississippi.

**JILLIAN SMART** is an award-winning CEO, master educator, and published author. She launched Jackson Education Support to develop more independent learners of all ages. This mission is accomplished by implementing personalized services and supporting engagement efforts. Ms. Smart facilitated workshops with Rankin County School District Family Resource Center, Chastain Flynt Memorial Library (Flowood), Mississippi Literacy Association, and Mississippi State University. Her self-published works include Parent Support: 30 Ways to Support Your Child's Education and Cultivating Grit: An Approach to Increasing Confidence. In addition to local and national feature articles, Ms. Smart is contributing author to University of Mississippi textbook, EDHE Academic Skills for College.

**TAREA STOUT** currently serves as Transition Coordinator for Madison County School District, one of the largest school districts in Mississippi. As transition coordinator, she has enjoyed this opportunity to use the knowledge she gained in the VR program to assist in the transition of young people as they leave the school systems to their next steps in life. Ms. Stout has worked in a variety of areas in the field of Rehabilitation during her career. She spent the bulk of her career in the public Vocational Rehabilitation Program in Mississippi. She has worked in many capacities including Counselor, Evaluator, CRP Manager, Regional Manager, and VR Director. Under her leadership, as VR Director, the program was nationally

recognized for excellence by the Rehabilitation Research and Training Center for Evidence Based Practice in Vocational Rehabilitation (RRTC-EBP-VR). She completed the National Rehabilitation Leadership Institute in 2014. Ms. Stout served as the 2015 National Rehabilitation Association President. She has served in leadership for the National Rehabilitation Association at the State and National Level. She has her Master of Science in Counselor Education, Certificate in Deafness and is a Mississippi LPC.

**BILLY TAYLOR** has served as the Chief of Staff at the Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services since 2015. Prior to his role with MDRS, Mr. Taylor served as a Special Assistant Attorney General with Mississippi's Attorney General's Office, where he represented various State Agencies. He is a graduate of Mississippi College of Law and hold a Bachelor's Degree from Mississippi State University.

**CANDICE TAYLOR** has twenty-three years of experience in the field of Special Education. She graduated from Mississippi College with a degree in Special Education in the area of mild/moderate disabilities. Ms. Taylor taught in an inclusion program in Jackson Public Schools for two years. She spent 17 years with Clinton Public Schools, as a self-contained special education teacher, inclusion teacher, then community-based teacher. Ms. Taylor served as Parent Outreach Specialist in the MDE, Office of Special Education's Bureau of Parent Engagement and Support for a year and a

half and has spent the last two and a half years in the Office of Early Childhood as the Special Education Instructional Specialist/619 Coordinator.

**ANGELA D. TOWERS** is the Northern Region Family Engagement and Transition Coach for the Mississippi Department of Education's Office of Early Childhood. A former principal and classroom teacher, Ms. Towers has 17 years of professional experience working with children and families. She attended Delta State University, earning a Bachelor of Science in Education (Elementary Education), Master of Education in Educational Leadership, and an Educational Specialist in Administration and Supervision. Her most notable accomplishments include Cleveland School District Teacher of the Year and Past President of Mississippi Professional Educators. Ms. Towers reside in Cleveland, MS with her husband, Nathan, and children, Caleb and Natalie.

**LAURIE WEATHERSBY** is the Elementary Intervention Specialist in the Office of Elementary Education and Reading at the Mississippi Department of Education. She received her Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education from Mississippi State University and her Master's Degree from Mississippi College in Dyslexia Therapy. Ms. Weathersby served as a first-grade teacher and an elementary school interventionist. She was selected as Teacher of the Year for her school during her time as a school interventionist. Ms. Weathersby transitioned into the District Interventionist and Dyslexia Coordinator position at the district office before taking her current position at the Mississippi Department of Education. Ms. Weathersby is a Certified Academic Language Therapist and a Licensed Dyslexia Therapist.

## CONFERENCE AT A GLANCE

Thursday, October 17, 2019

8:00 a.m.- 9:00 a.m.	Registration			
9:00 a.m.- 10:15 a.m.	<b>Welcome and Opening Session</b> <i>Windsor I and II</i>  <b>Kerry Magro: Defining Special Needs: From Nonverbal to Professional Speaker</b>			
10:15 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.	Break			
	<b>Windsor III</b>	<b>Windsor IV and V</b>	<b>Churchill I and II</b>	<b>Winston I and II</b>
10:30 a.m.- 11:45 a.m.	<b>Social Skills: Strategies for Exceptional Learners</b> <i>Denise Harrison</i>	<b>Education Scholarship Account</b> <i>Jaecelyn Armstrong</i>	<b>Mississippi Family Engagement and Toolkit</b> <i>Amanda Adams and Angela Towers</i>	<b>Home and Community Based Services for Persons with ID/ DD and Autism</b> <i>Jennifer Fulcher and Betty Pinion</i>
11:45 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.	Lunch			
1:30 p.m.- 2:45 p.m.	<b>Transition, Empowerment, and Financial Resources</b> <i>Kevin Bishop, Chris Howard, and Billy Taylor</i>	<b>Education Scholarship Account</b> <i>Jaecelyn Armstrong</i>	<b>Making Adjustments at Home: Helping Your Young Child Meet the Standards</b> <i>Candice Taylor</i>	<b>How to Succeed in School with a Disability</b> <i>Kerry Magro</i>
2:45 p.m.- 3:00 p.m.	Break			
3:00 p.m.- 4:15 p.m.	<b>Transition, Empowerment, and Financial Resources</b> <i>Kevin Bishop, Chris Howard, and Billy Taylor</i>	<b>Kids with Grit: An Interactive Family Engagement Workshop</b> <i>Jillian Smart</i>	<b>Procedural Safeguards: Your Family's Special Education Rights</b> <i>Mona Spells Adou</i>	

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9:00 a.m.- 10:15 a.m.	<b>Tommie Mabry: Understanding Me Would Help You to Reach Me! (Perception Drives Performance)</b>			
10:15 a.m.- 10:30 a.m.	Break			
	<b>Windsor III</b>	<b>Windsor IV and V</b>	<b>Churchill I and II</b>	<b>Winston I and II</b>
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