



Clinton Public School District  
Dr. Phil Burchfield, Superintendent  
(601) 924-7533  
Media contact: Sandi Beason

### **Clinton schools to beef up financial literacy in grades 6-12**

CLINTON — It's hard to prepare students for the financial challenges of the real world, but a group of Clinton teachers will soon incorporate more economics into their classroom instruction.

Through a partnership with Mississippi College Center for Economic Education & Development and the Mississippi Council on Economic Education, a dozen Clinton teachers are participating in an economics workshop to learn innovative ways to teach financial literacy to their students.

"In Clinton, we want to educate our students on managing their personal finances," said Dr. Phil Burchfield, superintendent of the Clinton Public School District. "We want to teach them that the choices they make as individuals are linked to the broader economy. If they're better informed, the whole economy will benefit."

Dr. Pam Smith, who heads the MCEE, said the Master Teacher of Economics program is a special certification course which her agency partners with the Mississippi Department of Education to deliver.

"We started this program because there is an emphasis across the country to help kids learn skills in economic and financial literacy before they leave high school so they can demonstrate that they are literate in these two areas," she said.

The program at MC is the third of its kind in the state; MCEE also works with Mississippi State University and the University of Southern Mississippi to offer K-12 teacher training.

"Teachers are never taught a formal way to teach economic literacy to students," Smith said. "We're filling that gap. In the last four years, 220 teachers have earned the (economic education) endorsement.

"It will be a real plus for Clinton to have its teachers earning this."

The teacher certification course covers 20 concepts that teachers pass on to students, and is the equivalent of a six-hour graduate course on economics education.

"It's loaded with state-of-the-art resources, in terms of lessons to deliver economic literacy in the business world," she said. "It covers ways to teach these things at grade-appropriate levels to students. It applies to social studies, math, business. The new lessons are interactive so kids can understand in the classroom how the world works."

Burchfield said teachers do not have to completely retool to incorporate the new concepts into their lessons.

“It’s giving them additional skills to infuse economics education into their existing programs,” Smith said. “It helps kids understand what this national debt is about, and what it means to them. It helps them understand the difference between a recession and inflation, and how they and their decisions make a difference. We hope they will choose to save a lot more money. We want to make it clear that if they save money early and often, they can do very well in our free enterprise market.” While Clinton is the only school district in the metro area to offer this economics education training to its teachers, the MCEE has offered similar workshops in four other school districts.

MC business dean Marcelo Eduardo leads the MC School of Business Center for Economic Education and Development.

“We are working with the Clinton school district — they are integral to MC. We are appreciative of Phil Burchfield's leadership. The whole metro area of Jackson is what we are targeting,” Eduardo said.

The center on the Clinton campus will consult with public and private schools about how to put into place and manage Mississippi's required economics curriculum.

“The more teachers across the grades that can truly teach economics education, the better chance we have of reaching kids before they reach high school. Students make important financial decisions long before they reach high school,” Smith said.

“A significant portion of the population in this country is untrained and uneducated in basic economics and how it affects their day-to-day lives,” said Dr. Phil Burchfield. “As a result, people are over-leveraged. They’re spending more than they’re saving, and going deeper and deeper into debt. A solid economic education improves the lives of individuals, and a better economy that we can all benefit from.”

For more information about the Mississippi Council on Economic Education, visit [www.mscee.org](http://www.mscee.org). Learn more about the Clinton Public School District at [www.clintonpublicschools.com](http://www.clintonpublicschools.com).

Photos:

- economic ed1: Dr. Pam Smith, director of the Mississippi Council on Economic Education, speaks to a group of Clinton teachers about integrating financial literacy into their regular classroom curriculum.
- economic ed2: Dr. Pam Smith, director of the Mississippi Council on Economic Education, speaks to a group of Clinton teachers about integrating financial literacy into their regular classroom curriculum.
- economic ed3: Dr. Pam Smith, director of the Mississippi Council on Economic Education, speaks to a group of Clinton teachers while Dr. Marcelo Eduardo, far left, looks on. Eduardo, business dean at Mississippi College, leads the MC School of Business Center for Economic Education and Development.