

Dr. Caterria Payton

Mississippi Administrator Of The Year
2023



Education

Dr. Payton earned an associate of arts in education from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC), a bachelor of science in education from The University of Southern Mississippi (USM), a masters in elementary education from William Carey University (WCU) followed by a specialist and a doctorate in educational leadership and research also from The University of Southern Mississippi.

Work Experience

Principal ~ Pascagoula High School
July 2018 - Present

Principal ~ Jackson Elementary
July 2013 - June 2018

Principal ~ Central Elementary
July 2009 - June 2013

Lead Teacher ~ District Wide
July 2007 - June 2009

General Education and Inclusion Teacher ~
Martin Bluff Elementary July 2001 - June 2007

Assistant Teacher ~ Singing River Elementary
July 1999 - June 2001

Platform

While my philosophy of education has always been centered around meeting the needs of ALL students, as an administrator, it has evolved into also meeting the needs of ALL teachers so that they can provide high quality learning experiences for our students. Across our nation, teacher shortages are caused by teachers leaving the profession largely due to feelings of frustration and not having a voice. As the late Rita Pearson so eloquently stated, "Every child needs a CHAMPION!" If we expect our teachers to be CHAMPIONS for our students, administrators must be CHAMPIONS for our teachers by creating environments where our teachers feel safe and supported. When teachers feel that they are seen, heard and valued, they are more emotionally sound and confident and are more likely to be effective CHAMPIONS for ALL students.

Awards / Recognition

National Board-Certification 2003 | Teacher of the Year 2004 | District Administrator of the Year 2017 (elementary) and 2022 (secondary) | Mississippi School Board Association (MSBA) Prospective Superintendents Leadership Academy Graduate 2018 | Gulf Coast Women's Magazines 100 Most Successful Women to Know 2022 and 2023 | State Superintendent's Advisory Committee 2021 and 2022 | MDE's 3rd Congressional District Administrator of the Year

Professional Biography

A native of New Orleans, La., Dr. Catteria B. Payton has lived on the Mississippi Gulf Coast for 29 years. Dr. Payton has spent all of her 24-year career in education in the Pascagoula-Gautier School District where she has served in various capacities including assistant teacher, teacher, district-wide lead teacher, elementary principal and high school principal.

Dr. Payton has devoted her life to public education. She currently serves as secretary of the board of trustees in the Moss Point school District and on the advisory board for the Mississippi for the Mississippi Department of Education's state superintendent. She is also a member of the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and the Mississippi Association of Secondary School Principals (MASSP).

After serving 8 years in the United States Army Reserves, Dr. Payton earned an associate of arts in education from Mississippi Gulf Coast Community College (MGCCC), a bachelor of science in education from The University of Southern Mississippi (USM), a masters in elementary education from William Carey University (WCU) followed by a specialist and doctorate in educational leadership and research also from The University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Payton is truly a lifelong learner.

While she is elated to be selected as the Mississippi's 2023 Administrator of the Year, Dr. Payton considers her greatest accomplishments to be the recruitment, hiring, and mentoring of many of the educators and school and district leaders in her district and across the state. Through this work, she helps to ensure that every child in the state has access to a quality education and all teachers have the resources and support that they need to be successful in the classroom.