



# Reports show education data can be more accurate

## Press Release

Some public school records may be incomplete or contain errors, potentially skewing school program assessments or affecting local school district funding. Two reports released by State Auditor Shad White's office today offer recommendations to ensure Mississippi public schools produce and report accurate data.

"Getting the numbers right is critical for public education in Mississippi," Auditor White said about the report findings. "These audits make some important recommendations about how to make sure that education data are reliable."

Auditors first reviewed the Mississippi Student Information System (MSIS) – the primary source of data about things like student attendance – and found some of the attendance data local school districts submit to the Mississippi Department of Education (MDE) goes unverified and is, in some cases, incorrect. For instance, some districts "excused" absences without having paperwork to show why they were excused. Other districts called students present in one attendance-tracking software but called the same students absent on the same day in a different piece of software. Auditors also found many school districts are lacking strong data security policies.

Recommendations for addressing these problems include:

- The MDE should conduct an internal audit to ensure attendance data are correct.

- School districts should complete periodic data checks to confirm collected data are accurate before submission to the MDE.

The second report focused on the state's Career and Technical Education (CTE) program – a nearly \$50 million annual investment into Mississippi public schools that trains students for careers like carpentry or engineering. The report found that the CTE programs were supposed to track whether its students go on to graduate and get a job, but they failed to follow kids if they participated in CTE before their last year of high school. Given this problem, it is im-

**Mozzarella cheese**  
Cut each celery stalk into 3 pieces; set aside. Combine cream cheese, dressing mix, mayonnaise, and Mozzarella cheese; stuff celery with cream cheese mixture. Garnish with paprika and refrigerate before serving. \*This makes a great appetizer or an addition to any meal.

**BBQ PORK DIP**  
2 cups cooked pork, chopped  
1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened  
¾ cup BBQ sauce  
¼ cup Ranch dressing  
¼ cup sour cream  
1 ½ cups shredded Cheddar cheese  
1 green onion, chopped

In a mixing bowl, combine pork, cream cheese, sour cream, Ranch dressing, BBQ sauce, and 1 cup of the cheese. Spread mixture into a baking dish that has been sprayed with Pam. Top the dip with chopped green onion and remaining cheese. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes. Serve with Fritos or Scoops.

\*This can be made in advance and refrigerated until time for baking. Let dip come to room temperature before baking.

\*Lee Ann Fleming is a Holmes County native, food columnist and has garnered fame for her recipes featured in the film, *The Help*. Fleming can be reached at [lafkitchen@hughes.net](mailto:lafkitchen@hughes.net).

- Purple – is the color of royalty
- Gold – is elegant and prestigious
- Orange – is energetic and attention getting
- Brown – is earthy, comforting, safe and dependable
- Black – is versatile, modern, and traditional

Colors and symbols are etched in our brains when it comes to certain brands. The following are the top 10 most recognizable brands worldwide.

- 10) Disney
- 9) McDonald's
- 8) Mercedes-Benz
- 7) Toyota
- 6) Samsung
- 5) Coca Cola
- 4) Microsoft
- 3) Amazon
- 2) Google
- 1) Apple

Whatever brands you choose for today's recipes, I hope you will give them a try.

Thanks for reading.

### SPINACH ARTICHOKE CHICKEN CASSEROLE

- 4 cups cooked chicken, chopped or shredded
- 1 (9 oz.) pkg. frozen spinach, thawed and well drained
- 1 (14 oz.) can artichoke hearts (plain, not marinated), chopped
- 1 (8 oz.) cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 ½ cups grated Mozzarella cheese
- 2/3 cup sour cream
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- Salt and Pepper to taste

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a large bowl, mix the cream cheese, sour cream, heavy cream, mayonnaise, garlic, salt and pepper. Add the rest of the ingredients, except for the Mozzarella cheese, and combine. Pour into a greased 9 x 12 inch baking dish that has been sprayed with nonstick cooking spray. Bake for 20 minutes; top with cheese and bake for another 10-15, until cheese melts. Allow to cool slightly before serving.

\*Tried this recipe last week. Like we say at my house – "It's a keeper."

### ITALIAN CREAM CHEESE STUFFED CELERY

- 6 or 7 stalks of celery
- 1 (8 oz.) cream cheese
- 1 (0.7 oz.) pkg. Italian dressing mix
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup shredded

# Happy Birthday

- August 20** - Chance Pritchard Barnes, Korey Jones, Brian Bethany, Joseph Hammett, Tyler Walker, Jeffrey Cotten, Carrie Sims, Keegan Hutchison, Maggie H. Wise
- August 21** - Evan Horn, Ryan Lewis, Edetric J. Carthan, Radarius Jackson, Aljean H. Garrett, Jorel Johnson, Wes Hudson, Chelsie McNeer Tate, Ronnie Sullivan, Alma Seamster
- August 22** - Brett Spell, Leebeth Gilmore, Gordon Scallan, Quinn Murphree, Johnnie Davis, Karey Johnson, Larry Bonds, Mary Claire Smith, Gina McCrory, Terri Spencer, Aleatha
- August 23** - Janie Rhyne, Glynda Boatner, Brewer Eldridge, Tootsie Baughn, Alicia Wigginton, Allen Rogers, Katie Malone, Mary F. Meeks, Wade Dickard, Hillary Dickard
- August 24** - Chanda Cade Ferguson, Jackie Hammett, Kelle Atkinson, Jill Killebrew, Shannon Gallagher, Donald Broyles, Gracie Richardson, William Clark, Jenny Swearingen, Spencer Rutledge
- August 25** - Mollie Clark Hudson, Brandon Taylor Crossno, Terry Richards
- August 26** - Reece Vaughn, Torris Brown, Cole Hood

possible to know how many students used their training to obtain a job.

Auditors also found MDE submitted the exact same number of CTE participants in two consecutive years, suggesting the number may not have been accurate.

Auditors made several recommendations, including the following:

- Reports about CTE's effectiveness should include all students who participate in the program.

- Internal controls should be put in place to prevent data errors.

"As a product of our public schools, making sure the education system's data are accurate is important to me personally," said White. "We've got to know if kids are being adequately prepared for a career. If we can't find a way to measure the effectiveness of our career training, then we can't know where to invest more resources. We've also got to know the attendance numbers are right, because that determines school funding."

Both the MSIS report and the CTE report can be found online at the Auditor's website under the "Reports" tab.

**August 14 Player of the Week**

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## IN LOVING MEMORY ON YOUR HEAVENLY BIRTHDAY...

This day will be a celebration of the short time you were here. You will always be remembered with great love and many tears. But to only feel pain and sorrow would not be fair to you. Your life meant so much more to us more than words could say. You were here so briefly, I wonder if you knew all the ways you've touched our world and our hearts and everyone who knew you since the day God called you home. There will always be a big void in our life and a hole in our hearts that will never heal. Our souls will grieve forever. Will we forget or stop loving you? NO!! Not now, not ever. As this day is upon us, oh, how our hearts still hurt. But even as we mourn your death, we will always celebrate your birth.

We love you, Chanan Randle, Jr. August 23, 2001 - March 19, 2020 From the Wilkes and Cooper Families