



Milam Recognized For Community Partnerships

TUPELO, Miss. — One year after Rankin received the coveted Mississippi Association of Partners in Education Award, Milam extended the Tupelo Public School District streak when told it was being honored.

However, the largest sixth-grade school in Mississippi didn't win just one award. It won two and was the only elementary school with that distinction.

The awards feature teachers Laura Sheffield and Nancy Barrett.

Sheffield, the 2020 TPSD Teacher of the Year, is being recognized for the community partnership she has established with the [Circadence Corporation](#), while Barrett's award stems from her relationship with both the [Tennessee Valley Authority](#) (TVA) and the [Association for Excellence in Education](#) (AEE).

Both will be honored at the Governor's Award Luncheon on March 5 in Hattiesburg.

"These community partnerships increase the quality of education our students receive at Milam Elementary," assistant principal Anthony Golding said. "We are thankful for what TVA and AEE does for our girl's and boy's leadership programs. We are also thankful for the unique opportunities the Circadence Corporation provides our students through the Cyber Ninja program, preparing our students for future careers in coding and technological sectors. The recognition of not one, but two, Partnership Excellence Awards further confirms how appreciative we are of community partnerships as we all help students develop into productive citizens."

Sheffield worked with Circadence to showcase how a career in computer science provided numerous opportunities. Together, they worked to launch Cyber Day in December, where students were introduced to the three pillars of technology — hardware, software and networking. Students learned about ingenuity, invention, maintenance and cybersecurity.

There was so much interest that in January a Cyber Ninja Club was created and it meets every Monday after school.

“The impact of this partnership will be ongoing as we continue to partner with Circadence to introduce the computer science careers to students,” Sheffield said. “This partnership has also brought attention to the need of more computer science opportunities at Tupelo’s middle school and high school.”

Brad Prewitt, Executive Vice President of Government Relations and Development, said it’s a chance for Circadence to show possible career opportunities for those students who didn’t know this field existed.

“Milam is pioneering cyber learning for the next generation of professionals by embracing gamified cyber education using our Project Ares platform,” he said.

Barrett, a gifted teacher at Milam, was awarded a grant from AEE and TVA to supplement the cost of the Launching Leaders Program, an eight-week project for boys and girls focusing on leadership.

The boys’ curriculum, based in the fall, is inspired by *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens* by Sean Covey, while the girls’ sessions, held in the spring, are derived from *Everyday Leadership for Teams* by Mariam McGregor, *The Confidence Code For Girls* by Katty Kay and *Girl Meets World* by Rachel Simmons.

Amy Tate, Government Relations Manager with TVA, organized the girls’ curriculum and schedules community guest speakers.

“Studies have shown that girls experience a dramatic drop in confidence at the onset of adolescence,” she said. “Our goal with this program is to equip the girls with the courage, skills and community to exercise their voices and leadership skills.”

The feedback, Barrett said, has been exceptionally positive.

“Parents and students repeatedly express that this experience is one of the best learning experiences offered through TPSD by inspiring students to learn more about leadership, public service, and the legislative process,” she said.