

Facts on 2015 Starkville/Oktibbeha County School Consolidation

Because of the passing and signing of the consolidation bill in the Mississippi legislature, the consolidation of the Starkville School District and the Oktibbeha County School District will occur in Fall 2015. The bill provides zero funding. It is also unprecedented in Mississippi for a failing school district and a successful school district to consolidate.

As can be gathered, the key to the success of this venture is funding. There are several funding streams that have been outlined.

I have attached 2 documents:

-- consolidation spark: This document has been out since January of 2014 and describes the plan for consolidation, including the current reverse referendum. There are a couple of outdated items, (Overstreet in particular) but nothing terribly major.

-- partnership school: This is a most recent document approved in late December 2014 that is specifically about the 6-7 school.

Millage for SSD and OCSD including a break-down of debt service

SSD's current millage rate is 66.57 while Oktibbeha County's is 59.

SSD collects 52 mils for non-debt service while OCSD collects 56 mils for non-debt service.

SSD's debt millage is 14.11 while Oktibbeha County's debt millage is 3. (So, when someone says SSD's millage rate is more than double the county's they are referring to debt millage – bond issues for school improvement projects.)

When the two districts merge to form the Starkville Oktibbeha County School District, the operational millage rate for residents in the former Oktibbeha County School District will fall from 56 mils to 52 mils because the assessed value of a mil will increase. The current overall millage which includes 3 mils for debt service will fall from 59 to 55 for OCSD.

SSD 2007 bond issue

SSD's last major bond issue passed in 2007 totaled \$26.5 million. It resulted in a millage increase of 8.27 mils for residents of the Starkville School District which will roll off in 2025.

The 2007 bond issue included \$5.32 million for expansion of AMS to include a new two story wing to house sixth grade. The cafeteria was also expanded to accommodate more students.

In addition, the SSD spend \$3.82 million at Starkville High School to construct new science labs and additional classrooms prior to consolidation.

SSD's is also currently collecting roughly 3 mils to pay off bonds issued in 1995/96.

3 mil levy for OCSD and SSD

OCSD and SSD issued a 3 mil levy for the respective districts in the last year to begin the process of renovating and repairing buildings in advance of consolidation.

The funds from the 3 mil levy in the OCSD are being used to finish the gym at East Elementary School, replace roofs and tile at East and West Elementary Schools, renovate restrooms, and construct an ADA entry access at West Elementary, along with other necessary renovations to upgrade the existing elementary schools.

A 3 mil levy approved in June 2013 by the SSD Board of Trustees authorized the installation of a new turf field and track at Yellow Jacket Stadium which was funded in part through private contributions. The 3 mil levy also funded roof repairs at Ward Stewart, AMS, Overstreet, Henderson, SHS and Millsaps, new windows at Sudduth and the SHS and AMS gym, new tile at Sudduth and AMS, air conditioning system for Henderson gym, security fence at SHS, cafeteria expansion at SHS to accommodate students from East and West High Schools, and 35 new HVAC units.

Bonds for OCSD for \$13.2 million

The Legislature gave the OCSD the authority to issue bonds in the amount of \$13.2 million in an effort to help pay for the expense of consolidation which includes \$10 million for a new 6-7 grade school on the campus of Mississippi State University. This funding source was recommended by the 7 member Commission on School Structure that included representatives from MSU, SSD, OCSD and MDE.

The remaining \$3.2 million will be used to purchase new buses and technology for the students and teachers in the former Oktibbeha County School District which are currently provided to the students and teachers in Starkville School District. This includes a laptop for every teacher, smartboards in every classroom, and modernized bus transportation.

The bond referendum would cost property owners in the OCSD about \$14 per month on a home valued at \$100,000.