

By: Representative Ellis

To: Education; Universities  
and Colleges

HOUSE BILL NO. 984

1 AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE STARKVILLE-OKTIBBEHA CONSOLIDATED  
2 SCHOOL DISTRICT AND MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY, WITH THE  
3 APPROVAL OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES OF STATE INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER  
4 LEARNING, TO ENTER AT THEIR DISCRETION INTO AGREEMENTS FOR THE  
5 LEASE OF LANDS AND THE ESTABLISHMENT, CONSTRUCTION, MAINTENANCE  
6 AND OPERATION OF A MODEL RURAL EDUCATION SCHOOL TO SERVE THE  
7 SIXTH- AND SEVENTH-GRADE STUDENT POPULATION OF OKTIBBEHA COUNTY;  
8 TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI MIDDLE SCHOOL UNIVERSITY-BASED ACADEMY;  
9 TO PROVIDE THAT THE ACADEMY SHALL BE A MODEL SCHOOL FOR THE  
10 EDUCATION OF SIXTH AND SEVENTH GRADE STUDENTS IN OKTIBBEHA COUNTY  
11 AND FOR THE EDUCATION OF TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS ENROLLED IN  
12 THE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY; TO  
13 PROVIDE THAT THE 2017-2018 SCHOOL YEAR SHALL BE THE ACADEMY'S  
14 FIRST YEAR OF OPERATION; TO REQUIRE THE SCHOOL BOARD OF THE  
15 STARKVILLE-OKTIBBEHA CONSOLIDATED SCHOOL DISTRICT AND THE COLLEGE  
16 OF EDUCATION AT MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY TO JOINTLY GOVERN THE  
17 ACADEMY; TO REQUIRE THE LEGISLATURE TO APPROPRIATE FUNDS FOR THE  
18 2017 FISCAL YEAR TO THE STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION FOR THE  
19 CONSTRUCTION OF THE ACADEMY; TO REPEAL SECTION 37-131-15,  
20 MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, WHICH AUTHORIZES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A  
21 TEACHER'S DEMONSTRATION OR PRACTICE SCHOOL IN OKTIBBEHA COUNTY;  
22 AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

23 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

24 **SECTION 1.** (1) The Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School  
25 District and Mississippi State University, with the approval of  
26 the Board of Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning,  
27 are authorized and empowered, in their individual discretion, to  
28 enter into an agreement for the purpose of designing,



29 constructing, maintaining and operating a model rural education  
30 school to serve all sixth- and seventh-grade students residing in  
31 Oktibbeha County. The Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School  
32 District and Mississippi State University are further authorized  
33 and empowered, in their individual discretion, to transfer funds  
34 to the other and expend such funds on mutually agreeable terms and  
35 conditions for the construction, maintenance and operation of such  
36 school.

37 (2) Subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees of  
38 State Institutions of Higher Learning, Mississippi State  
39 University is authorized and empowered, in its discretion, to  
40 lease lands under its possession and control to the  
41 Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District, and the  
42 Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District is authorized  
43 and empowered, in its discretion, to lease from Mississippi State  
44 University, upon mutually agreeable terms and conditions, lands  
45 under the possession and control of said university which are  
46 deemed suitable for the development of a model rural education  
47 school to serve all sixth- and seventh-grade students residing in  
48 Oktibbeha County, for a term not to exceed ninety-nine (99) years.  
49 Any such lease shall not be cancelled by successor boards based on  
50 the binding successor doctrine.

51 **SECTION 2.** (1) There is created the Mississippi Middle  
52 School University-based Academy, which shall be a model school for  
53 students in the sixth and seventh grades, located in Oktibbeha



54 County, Mississippi. The purpose of the school shall be to  
55 provide the optimum educational opportunity for sixth and seventh  
56 grade students in the Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School  
57 District and a model teaching program for the education of  
58 teachers and administrators enrolled in the College of Education  
59 at Mississippi State University through an educational partnership  
60 between the school district and the College of Education.

61 (2) The 2017-2018 school year shall be the first year that  
62 the academy may admit students for enrollment.

63 (3) Admission to the Mississippi Middle School  
64 University-based Academy must be open to all sixth and seventh  
65 grade students residing in the Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated  
66 School District. The academy may not limit admission based on  
67 ethnicity, national origin, religion, gender, income level,  
68 disabling condition, proficiency in the English language, or  
69 academic or athletic ability. If capacity is insufficient to  
70 enroll all students who wish to attend the academy, students must  
71 be selected through a lottery process that is equitable,  
72 randomized, transparent and impartial in order for every student  
73 to have an equal opportunity for enrollment. However, students  
74 returning to the academy after completing the sixth grade at the  
75 academy must be given an enrollment preference.

76 (4) The Mississippi Middle School University-based Academy  
77 shall be governed jointly by the School Board of the  
78 Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District and the College



79 of Education at Mississippi State University. The school board  
80 and College of Education shall execute an agreement clearly  
81 defining the roles and responsibilities of the school district and  
82 the College of Education in the administration and operation of  
83 the academy. It shall be the duty of the school board, acting  
84 jointly with the College of Education, to:

85 (a) Develop a detailed plan relating to the  
86 construction, opening, operation, maintenance and funding of the  
87 academy to be presented to the Legislature before the 2017 Regular  
88 Session;

89 (b) Promulgate policies, rules and regulations  
90 necessary for the administration and operation of the academy;

91 (c) Employ administrators, teachers and other licensed  
92 and noninstructional personnel at the appropriate time for the  
93 academy;

94 (d) Develop the annual budget for the academy; and

95 (e) Undertake any other actions that may be necessary  
96 in the establishment and operation of the academy.

97 (5) The School Board of the Starkville-Oktibbeha  
98 Consolidated School District and the College of Education at  
99 Mississippi State University may solicit assistance from the staff  
100 of the State Department of Education and the Board of Trustees of  
101 State Institutions of Higher Learning as required for the  
102 implementation of this act. In addition, the board and College of  
103 Education, acting jointly, may enter into such contracts or



104 agreements as may be deemed necessary to carry out the purposes  
105 and intent of this act.

106 (6) The school board of the Starkville-Oktibbeha  
107 Consolidated School District and the College of Education at  
108 Mississippi State University may receive contributions, donations,  
109 gifts, bequests of money, other forms of financial assistance as  
110 well as property, equipment, materials or labor from any public or  
111 private source for the construction, operation and support of the  
112 Mississippi Middle School University-based Academy.

113 **SECTION 3.** For the 2017 fiscal year, the Legislature shall  
114 appropriate an amount of not less than Thirty Million Dollars  
115 (\$30,000,000.00) from any available state funds, including any  
116 proceeds of general obligation bonds that may be authorized by  
117 the Legislature for the construction of the Mississippi Middle  
118 School University-based Academy, to the State Department of  
119 Education for the exclusive purpose of implementation of this act.

120 **SECTION 4.** Section 37-131-15, Mississippi Code of 1972,  
121 which authorizes Oktibbeha County and the former Starkville  
122 Municipal Separate School District to cooperate with the Board of  
123 Trustees of State Institutions of Higher Learning in the  
124 establishment and operation of a teacher's demonstration or  
125 practice school, is repealed.

126 **SECTION 5.** This act shall take effect and be in force from  
127 and after July 1, 2016.

