

Pro MSU Proposal: 2

Feedback for MSMS proposals

From Lee, JuYoung <jlee@humansci.msstate.edu>
Date Fri 2/28/2025 11:37 AM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>
Cc James Martin <James.Martin@cumulus.com>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing to share my perspective on the potential relocation of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) to Mississippi State University (MSU). As a parent of a current MSMS junior, a faculty member at MSU, and a resident of Starkville, I recognize that my opinion may be an unpopular one. However, I firmly believe that the decision regarding MSMS's location should not be based on past relationships with MUW and the city of Columbus but rather on what best serves the students and their future. Therefore, I strongly support moving MSMS to MSU and integrating it with the Starkville-OkTibbeha County School District and the MSU community to provide students with expanded academic and extracurricular opportunities.

MSMS is an investment in the future of our state, and its location should be determined by the opportunities it can provide to students. Relocating MSMS to MSU would significantly expand access to academic resources, including increased dual enrollment and college-level coursework for qualified students. Additionally, it would enhance extracurricular opportunities, providing students with a broader range of experiences in the arts, athletics, and research with the support of the world-class MSU faculty—experiences that help shape well-rounded young adults not only in terms of academic ability but also in their social and personal development.

Many students who were actively involved in extracurricular activities at their previous high schools have had to give up those valuable experiences due to the current limitations at MSMS. For example, my daughter, who was the first-chair clarinetist for two years at Starkville High School and a two-time participant in the Mississippi Lions Band, as well as a varsity golfer who competed at the state championship level for the last three years, had to reduce or quit both activities because those opportunities do not exist at MSMS. These activities are not just hobbies; they cultivate leadership, teamwork, and discipline—qualities that are just as critical for success as academic excellence.

I understand that change comes with challenges, but prioritizing student benefits should be at the heart of this discussion. Thank you for your time and leadership in shaping the future of MSMS. I appreciate your dedication to ensuring that students receive the best possible education and opportunities.

Sincerely,

JuYoung Lee

Support for MSMS Relocation to Mississippi State University

From Kate Thompson <skatethompson.525@gmail.com>
Date Tue 3/4/2025 11:26 AM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Donna Boone,

I want to thank you and the Mississippi State Board of Education for your commitment to the future of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. As a proud MSMS alumna (Class of 2011) and an MSU graduate (Class of 2015), I deeply appreciate the board's dedication to ensuring that MSMS continues to serve the brightest students in our state.

I strongly believe that Mississippi State University is the best choice for the future of MSMS, and I encourage the board to consider the immense benefits MSU offers to both the school and its students.

MSU has consistently demonstrated a commitment to academic excellence, infrastructure development, and student opportunities. The university invests heavily in its campus, offering modernized research facilities, technology, and classrooms—critical resources for a school like MSMS, which has long struggled with outdated facilities. MSU also fosters an exceptional early research culture that would benefit MSMS students immensely. As an MSMS student, I was passionate about biochemical research but found it difficult to access research opportunities; there was a bus that traveled to MSU for early research students once weekly and the thought of losing study time to bus travel time was insane to 12th-grade me). Had MSMS been at MSU, I would have begun exploring research much earlier.

Additionally, MSU's robust public transit system is a game-changer for high school students who do not have access to personal transportation. As an MSU student, I relied heavily on campus transit to access classes across campus, including at the vet school, and I know firsthand how critical this resource is. More broadly, Starkville has prioritized public transportation, which allows students to access groceries, school supplies, and other essentials safely and independently. Safety is another key advantage—MSU has a significantly larger campus security presence compared to MUW, an essential factor in ensuring the well-being of MSMS students.

MSU's diverse academic programs and vast resources would also expose MSMS students to a broader range of career paths. When I attended MSMS, many of my peers and I felt pressured (by both well-intended but poorly informed parents as well as competition and ego) to attend expensive, out-of-state private universities. As an adult, I am beyond grateful that I attended MSU instead. MSU provided me with world-class opportunities: I became a Goldwater Scholar, my tuition was fully covered through merit-based scholarships, and I became a published author on a scientific paper—all for free.

Meanwhile, I watched friends accumulate staggering student loan debt, sometimes exceeding \$200,000 before graduate school. MSMS students are almost certain to pursue higher education, and early exposure to an institution like MSU destigmatizes public universities, proving that exceptional, affordable education exists within Mississippi.

Lastly, MSU's prominence would help increase MSMS's visibility. Many students currently discover MSMS through word of mouth, but relocating to a well-known university like MSU would make the program more accessible to high-achieving students across the state.

For all these reasons, I strongly support MSU's proposal and urge the board to select Mississippi State University as the future home of MSMS. Thank you for your time and dedication to this decision, and please feel free to reach out if I can provide any further insight.

Sincerely,
Kate Thompson, DVM
MSMS Class of 2011
MSU Class of 2015