

Pro MUW: 72

Msms

From Joseph Boggess <whitehall1843@icloud.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 6:15 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr.Boone: i believe MSMS shouldn't be moved. The campus is secure and has wonderful physical fitness and recreation facilities including an indoor pool. The nearby downtown is an easy walk and isnt full of bars. The faculty lives here and isnt eager to commute or move. The community was from its inception and still is supportive. (I am a donor to the MSMS foundation; but probably wont be as enthusiastic if the school leaves.)Muw benefits from having the students on campus and would be harmed if they were removed. Please don't recommend moving this very successfully operated institution. Thanks for listening, Joseph Boggess

Sent from my iPhone

In Support of MSMS at MUW

From Bogue, Matt <mbogue@dutchco.net>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 12:49 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dr. Donna Boone, Chief Academic Officer
Mississippi Department of Education

Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing as a longtime Columbus resident and a business owner imploring you and your colleagues at MDE to support MUW's bid to retain the Mississippi School for Math and Science (MSMS) on its campus. I have no doubt that you have heard a number of reasons why MSMS makes more sense at MUW and just as many reasons why it makes more sense at MSU.

I am not a graduate of either school, but I am close enough to understand the value that each brings to the table. Without question, MSU's campus offers a plethora of extracurricular activities that are highly effective at enriching the undergraduate student experience. One must also concede that State's research/lab facilities, designed to withstand the scrutiny of world-class undergraduate and post-graduate research, are superior to those available at MUW. The appeal of the "SEC lifestyle" is attractive on the surface. If the purpose of MSMS was to accelerate gifted junior and senior high school students into a large University experience, MSU would be the clear winner.

However, the purpose of MSMS goes way beyond a large University experience. The school is designed to meet the needs of Mississippi's most academically gifted and talented students, with an emphasis on STEM education. According to its website, MSMS "excels at providing innovative learning experiences, leadership development opportunities, and holistic residential life programs geared toward high-achieving students." MUW has been critical to the service of this mission for nearly forty years and remains deeply committed to its successful and longstanding partnership with MSMS.

MUW's proposal to keep MSMS on its campus is a call to action for MDE. Despite political pressure, keeping MSMS at MUW should be an easy and fiscally responsible decision. According to both proposals, new investment in MSMS at MUW represents a significant savings compared to construction of a new campus in Starkville/Oktibbeha County. Additionally, reinvestment in MSMS at MUW will avoid the potentially unsavory appearance of the State of Mississippi funding the development of a new local high school campus.

Thank you for your consideration of MUW's proposal to keep MSMS on its campus in Columbus. I trust you will support its bid.

Sincerely,

Matt Bogue
President, The Dutch Group
Columbus, MS



Matt Bogue

29 Tom Rose Road
Columbus, MS 39701
Tel: [662-327-5202](tel:662-327-5202)
E-Mail: mboque@dutchco.net
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MSMS: Where should it be located?

From Kate Bowman <khbowman66@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 2:37 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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I am a secondary math educator and have lived in Columbus and Starkville and wanted to weigh in on the MSMS potential move. I love both towns and their Universities. I think MSMS currently has a unique and flourishing location. On a very important note, MSMS being in Columbus has a substantial economic impact for our state and the community. I believe Mississippi has to be careful about looking for "new" opportunities, industries, etc. from within our state and close proximity. This usually means one business closes and one moves to another location within the state. That's not progress. The city of Columbus has talented MSMS faculty and staff that live in the community and support their economy and livelihood. It has also supported the students as they have lived in the town of Columbus. If the Math and Science School were to move, MS State and Starkville would gain a tremendous boost in several areas, but Columbus and MUW would suffer a big loss. We have to start thinking as a family rather than independently for our gain. This is not growth for the State.

As far as the students that would be involved in the move, MS State is a very large University with respect to number of students attending and the actual size of the campus. That is a concern for high school students from mostly rural areas coming into that environment. High school students are very vulnerable and still children. MS State is very collegiate and could be an overwhelming campus.

The opportunities at a big University are abundant. But many of these are going to involve a large college population of students, whereas MUW can offer many of these without the big college aspect.

Considering the ideas that MS State would like to implement- they could offer many of these opportunities as a partnership to MSMS even if they stayed in Columbus. Collaboration of the two Universities!

MSMS has many traditions, such as hosting a Mathematics Competition with the students organizing and running the event each year. MSMS has a great community at MUW established from trial and error after 37 years. The MUW campus and its proximity to the quaint downtown is a significant plus to the students at MSMS.

As for infrastructure, this will be an expense for either campus. New dorms would potentially need to be constructed for the high school age students to be separated from the college mainstream if moved to MS State. MSMS will need support for upgrades and maintenance if it stays on the MUW campus.

There are pros and cons for both locations. MS State is an amazing campus, but I would like to see MSMS stay at the MUW campus and Mississippians give it more support no matter where it is located.

Respectfully,
Kate Bowman

MSMS in Columbus

From James Brigham <james.brigham@columbusms.org>
Date Thu 2/27/2025 7:31 AM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>
Cc Keith Gaskin <kgaskin@columbusms.org>

External Email

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There's a huge difference between getting an education and being so immersed, so transformed, so enthralled with living and learning that your education never really stops.

MSMS students are very special, talented and challenged every day at Mississippi University for Women (MUW). MSMS students have successfully partnered with MUW for over 37 years. The bedrock of their success is the individual attention they receive at MSMS and MUW. Here at the City of Columbus we have an intern from MSMS. Her work in City Hall is just a short walk from the MSMS facilities. Our intern receives special attention from City Staff and she thrives on being challenged. I have had the opportunity to attend both a large university (University of Wisconsin – Madison) and a smaller institutions University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire, and Cambridge College. The individual attention I received in the smaller institutions was vital to my success as a student and my endeavors in life. I am concerned that these talented MSMS students will get lost at MSU and not get the individual attention that they need and receive today.

Yours truly
Jim Brigham

James B Brigham
Chief Financial Officer, Treasurer
City of Columbus
P.O. Box 1408
Columbus, MS 39703-1408
Office: (662)329-5120
Cell: (662) 889-9693

MSMS

From Susan Bulla <sbulla5510@hotmail.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 3:23 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dr. Boone,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input to the process of selecting the optimal location for the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS). I am writing in support of the proposal submitted by Mississippi University for Women.

MSMS has been, and should continue to be, the host institution for this critically important program. MUW's history of success and the successes of its prior participants argue forcefully as reason the program should remain sited there. The MSMS complements the vision MUW has for preparing the young people of Mississippi to take leadership roles in their professional and community contributions.

Also, the facilities, faculty, and staff at MUW are uniquely positioned to offer instruction, collaboration, and experience in a supportive environment tailored to participants' needs.

I urge your favorable consideration of MUW's proposal to continue and grow its partnership with MSMS.

On a personal note, I graduated cum laude at MSCW with a degree in math with minor in physical science. The preparation I received at MSCW facilitated my successes in obtaining advanced degrees and serving my community professionally and personally.

Please let me know if I may provide additional information. Again, I appreciate the opportunity to provide input into this process.

Susan Bulla



**COLUMBUS-LOWNDES
PUBLIC LIBRARY SYSTEM**

February 27, 2025

Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing to express my deep concern about the proposal to relocate the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) from its longstanding home on the Mississippi University for Women (MUW) campus. As Library Director of the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library System (CLPLS), I have witnessed firsthand the invaluable role MSMS plays in our community. The school's presence not only fosters academic excellence but also enriches the cultural and educational landscape of Columbus in ways that cannot be easily replicated elsewhere.

Since its founding in 1988, MSMS has provided gifted students from across Mississippi with unparalleled educational opportunities. These students, in turn, have become an integral part of our community, engaging in programs that benefit residents of all ages. Among them:

- **Tales from the Crypt** – Students research local history on-site at CLPLS, working with history teacher Chuck Yarborough and Local Historian Mona Vance-Ali to bring history to life in a celebrated community event.
- **Mo Math Homework Help** – Coordinated by math teacher Lauren Zarandona and our children's librarian, Tori Hopper, MSMS students mentor younger children, strengthening math skills and fostering a love for learning.
- **Reading Buddies** – Our children's librarian, Tori Hopper, collaborates closely with MSMS students in this student-led program. By pairing them with young readers in our community, it fosters literacy, meaningful mentorship, and a connection that allows our littlest readers to build confidence while looking up to their MSMS mentors as role models.

Beyond these partnerships, MSMS students are some of our most dedicated library users. They rely on CLPLS for research, study space, and academic resources, contributing to a vibrant intellectual atmosphere. They have become beloved members of our library community, and their absence would leave a noticeable void.

The relocation of MSMS would not only disrupt these impactful programs but also deprive Columbus of the many cultural and economic benefits the school brings. Families visiting students support local businesses, and MSMS events draw attendees from across the state. The strong partnership between MSMS and MUW provides students with a collegiate atmosphere that enhances their education while fostering deep community engagement, something that other locations cannot easily replicate due to size.

I urge the Mississippi State Board of Education to consider the far-reaching consequences of relocating MSMS. Preserving this partnership is essential to maintaining the academic excellence, community integration, and rich educational opportunities that have been cultivated for decades.

Sincerely,

Erin Busbea
CLPLS Library Director



MS Department of Education
Deputy State Superintendent

Concerns for the Future of MSMS

From Victoria Callahan <victoriacallahanxxi@gmail.com>
Date Tue 3/4/2025 10:01 AM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To Whom it May Concern,

I am writing to express my strong opposition to Mississippi State University's (MSU) proposal to host the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS). This move threatens to dismantle an institution renowned for its academic excellence and national reputation while providing little tangible benefit to students, faculty, or taxpayers. If this move were to occur, I fear the school will not continue to serve as a pillar of academic excellence and opportunity for the state's brightest high schoolers.

I first learned about MSMS at the state swim meet when I was in middle school and immediately went home and researched it. Everything I saw from the opportunity to gain more independence living away from home, to being engaged with other high-achieving students with similar goals, to taking classes not offered at my home school made me want to attend. Three years later I would apply and be accepted into the class of 2021.

The school far surpassed my expectations from the moment I stepped on campus for orientation and met my new classmates. These were people who truly wanted to learn and had big dreams. The experiences I had went far beyond those that could be measured on a spreadsheet. The community of students, faculty, and staff make MSMS function. Even though my experience would be interrupted by the 2020 pandemic, I would continue to learn, not just academic lessons, but lessons about recovering from failure and learning to study. Things I had never experienced being a top student at my previous school.

MSMS has long been a top-ranked institution that attracts highly motivated students and dedicated faculty and staff that allow the institution to thrive. Moving the school to MSU would disrupt the learning environment that has made MSMS successful. Faculty members, who chose to teach small, gifted classes, would face morale issues and potential attrition due to a shift in the school's culture and mission. The proposed integration of Starkville students into MSMS classes and culture undermines the purpose of a selective school—allowing students who have not met the same admissions criteria to access its specialized education.

The argument that MSU will increase enrollment is misleading. As the Mississippi University for Women's (MUW) proposal states current MSMS facilities could accommodate up to 400 students if the state chose to fund such an expansion. Asking taxpayers to allocate \$85 million for a move to MSU and joining with Starkville schools, when half of that could significantly improve MSMS at its current location at MUW, is fiscally irresponsible.

Furthermore, a move to MSU would isolate MSMS students. They would be further from workout facilities, libraries, and essential social spaces. The ability to walk around MUW's campus and access

downtown Columbus and the Riverwalk provides students with important weekend social opportunities —something the MSU proposal does not offer.

It would be remiss not to talk about safety and parental willingness to allow their children to attend MSMS. MSU is a much busier campus with a different culture than MUW. This poses risks to high school students. While MSMS students are extremely smart they are still children (some starting as young as 14/15). Exposure to the more party-heavy activity of Starkville leaves students vulnerable to dangerous situations and would require stricter rules regarding leaving campus and informing ResLife of one's whereabouts. Taking away much of the freedom that acts as a stepping stone into adulthood and college for when MSMS students graduate.

The only conceivable benefit of this move is increased access to athletic facilities, but this alone does not justify dismantling a top-ranked institution. MSMS is a unique and vital educational asset to the state, and its success should be preserved, not jeopardized. I urge you to oppose this move and support efforts to enhance MSMS where it currently thrives.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I appreciate your commitment to the future of Mississippi's students and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,
Victoria Callahan
MSMS class of 2021

MSMS

From Nichole Cancellare <cancellareadventures@me.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 10:58 AM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Ms. Boone,

My son is currently a student at Starkville High School and has applied this year to attend MSMS next fall. We are both concerned about the potential of MSMS moving to MSU. As we live in Starkville, we are whole-hearted supporters of MSU and the quality education you can receive there. However, we do not believe it is appropriate for MSMS. Given the size of the university, we are concerned for both the quality of support and safety of these high school students. We believe that the MSMS is better served at MUW, where it can get both the support and safety it requires. I know that MSMS would like to have more involvement with the research and science/engineering support that would improve the already high quality education at MSMS. There is no reason that that avenue can not be pursued from the MUW campus.

Also, as a current student at Starkville High, we recognize the need for a new high school. The current one is overcrowded and facilities are in dire need of improvement. However, we do not believe that this improvement should come at the expense of MSMS. My son wants to leave the environment of Starkville High -- it is too big and while it offers a number of AP classes, it does not fully support its more advanced students. Outside of his AP classes, he feels ignored and the academic environment does not suit him. He wants to learn with other students and teachers who will challenge him academically. SHS will cancel classes for athletic achievement, and the majority of the student body is not interested in high achievement in academics. My son wants to attend MSMS to get away from SHS. One major problem we have had at SHS is the fact that there is not an Honors English class or AP class for a Freshman or Sophomore in English (this is due to required state testing, which he should be able to test out of, in our opinion). In the two years at SHS, my son has read only 1 novel as part of his English curriculum. He scored a 34 on his ACT in reading and is at a college-level in English. English has been a total waste of his time at SHS, which is unfortunate. If combined with SHS, once again, MSMS students will be probably less supported and lost in a bigger school system.

I hope you take these things into consideration when making your decision and your time to consider all stakeholders in this process is appreciated.

Thank you,
Nichole Cancellare

Sent from my iPhone

Concerns Regarding the Proposal to Move MSMS from MUW

From April Clayton <aprilboudreaux3@gmail.com>

Date Wed 2/26/2025 8:50 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Boone,

I hope this email finds you well. I am reaching out to express my deep concern regarding the proposal to move the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) from the Mississippi University for Women (MUW) campus. As someone who has both worked at MSMS and attended MUW, I have firsthand experience with the unique environment that makes MUW a safe and supportive place for these exceptional students.

During my time at MSMS, I served as a Community Leader in Goen Hall while completing my teaching license at MUW. Living alongside the incredible juniors and seniors at MSMS, I witnessed firsthand the level of trust and security that the MUW campus provided for these students. Unfortunately, I also saw how vulnerable they could be to outside influences, particularly from individuals at Mississippi State University (MSU).

There were multiple instances—at least five that I can recall—where we had to intervene and prevent men from MSU from interacting with these high school students. These individuals went out of their way to groom MSMS students, attempting to lure them off-campus and away from the safety of their residence halls. The MUW campus provided a protective environment that helped shield these young students from predatory behavior, something that would be significantly harder to control on a larger campus known for its party culture and concerning incidents involving women's safety.

MSMS students are still kids, despite their academic excellence, and they deserve to learn and grow in an environment that prioritizes their well-being. Moving them to a much larger campus, where these risks would only increase, is deeply troubling. The close-knit, secure setting of MUW fosters not only academic success but also personal safety and peace of mind for both students and their families.

I urge you to consider these concerns when discussing the future of MSMS. The current location provides a level of safety and oversight that would be difficult, if not impossible, to replicate elsewhere. Please do not overlook the importance of maintaining a secure environment for these students as they pursue their education.

Thank you for your time and for considering my perspective. I appreciate all that you do for education in Mississippi and for the students who depend on these institutions.

Thank you for your time,

April Clayton

The Future of MSMS

From Caspian Coughlin <caspian.p.coughlin@gmail.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 7:27 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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I believe that MSMS should stay where it is. I am a student currently applying to MSMS and I have family currently enrolled. After reviewing the proposal to move MSMS, it seems like a very bad idea. MSMS is underfunded as it is, and moving it would cost more money than just fixing the current campus up and the proposal to move it seems to just want to help Starkville not MSMS. I think that if MSMS moves, it will hurt the MSMS community, it will make parents less likely to send their children, and it will cost a lot more than just funding MSMS as much as it should be.

MSMS

From Lynne Curtis <dr437@bellsouth.net>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 7:35 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dr. Donna Boone:

As a Lowndes County resident, I was involved with the local committee that established MSMS in 1987. Since that time, I have been immensely proud of the State of Mississippi and also MSMS (staff and teachers) for the accomplishments of this school for Mississippi's brightest students. Mississippi and education often leads the nation in the wrong categories, but MSMS is one area that we can be proud of our state and the work of MSMS.

Research shows that Mississippi only funds about half the amount of our neighboring states of the same size. MSMS also produces about two times the number of National Merit Finalists than these same neighboring states. We are accomplishing more with less. In addition to these facts, MSMS ranks in the top high schools in the nation! We don't spend enough time telling these success stories. In our Columbus news, we often hear facts that those in different parts of the state do not hear about.

What do all the success stories tell us? The main thing we understand is that we need to support and continue an exceptional program where it is now located--instead of trying to invent the wheel all over again.

Thanks for your time and continued support of MSMS.

Sincerely,

Lynne B Curtis
MUW Alumni

Kalina Deng, MSMS '10: Letter Regarding MSMS's Future Location

From Kalina Deng <kalinayingnan.deng@gmail.com>
Date Tue 3/4/2025 3:40 PM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing as a proud alumna of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, an institution that has been a cornerstone of my academic and personal growth. After carefully reviewing the proposals for our school's future location, I strongly believe that remaining on the campus of the Mississippi University for Women (MUW) is the best choice for our students and our state.

My years at MSMS instilled in me a deep appreciation for the supportive, close-knit environment that has been cultivated at MUW over the past 37 years. Our school's unique identity — rooted in tradition, excellence, and a genuine commitment to the welfare of gifted high school students — cannot be underestimated. The MUW partnership has consistently provided a secure, nurturing setting where students are never more than five minutes from their classrooms, libraries, and health services, ensuring that every aspect of their educational experience is designed with their best interests at heart.

While the proposal to relocate MSMS to Mississippi State University is undoubtedly exciting — promising cutting-edge research facilities and expanded academic opportunities — it also brings challenges. Speaking also from my family's lived experience as a long-time resident of Starkville, the risk of diluting the high school culture and the potential safety concerns inherent in integrating a residential high school into a larger university environment are issues that cannot be overlooked. Our identity as a high school, with all the attendant traditions and personalized support, is something that has significantly contributed to our success and should be preserved.

I am convinced that staying at MUW will allow MSMS to continue offering an intimate, secure, and focused learning experience. The longstanding partnership at MUW has provided us with a model of academic excellence and personal care that has served generations of students well. It is this model that I believe should continue to guide our future.

Thank you for considering my recommendation. I remain fully committed to supporting any initiative that preserves the legacy and ensures the continued success and safety of MSMS students.

Sincerely,

Kalina Deng
Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, Class of 2010

MSMS - MUW Proposal

From Kyle Doherty <ktdohe@gmail.com>

Date Fri 2/28/2025 10:22 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Hello,

I'm a 2004 graduate of MSMS, and I wanted to lend my support for the "MUW Proposal" as opposed to the "MSU Proposal." MUW has been a great partner to MSMS since its inception and if it ain't broke, we shouldn't fix it.

Moving the campus would be disruptive, costly, and unnecessary. Please keep the school where it is.

Best,

Kyle Doherty (c/o 2004)

Concern for MSMS

From Catherine Dolan <catherinecowart_5@hotmail.com>

Date Wed 2/26/2025 9:16 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing to express my concern regarding the potential move of MSMS to MS from MUW. MUW is a much better environment for High school students than MS. MS is a large campus with a potential for harm at a much higher risk than on a small, well connected and safer environment that MUW can provide. I attended MUW and believe it to be a safe space where High school students can thrive. High school students are still kids and need to have the adults entrusted with their care both physical and educational understand the potential damage and harm that could result from this move.

Please consider this during this process. I appreciate the opportunity to share my concerns.

With regards,

Catherine Dolan

Sent from my iPhone

Comments regarding MSMS

From Sally Doty <senatorsallydoty@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 3:19 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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To whom it may concern:

I write to express concern regarding the RFP issued by MDE concerning the Mississippi School for Math and Science.

1. On its face, the sudden urgency and hurried timeline for response to the RFP is troubling and gives an appearance of impropriety.
2. Any issues with dorms or educational spaces could be addressed in the current location on the W campus with proper funding.
3. Facilities could be upgraded with significantly less funding on the W campus than on the MSU campus.
4. The largest university in Mississippi is not a conducive environment for a residential high school for 16 and 17 year olds.
5. The physical location of the W provides an excellent environment for a residential high school. The students have the freedom to walk to nearby churches and/or the downtown area, and the entire campus is gated with a SINGLE point of ingress/egress for safety.
6. If the school were to be moved, locations other than only MSU should be considered.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of these comments.

Senator Sally Doty (former)

District 39: Lincoln, Lawrence, Copiah, & Walthall Counties

183 Oak Hill Drive NE

Brookhaven, MS 39601

601-757-7446

MSMS Proposal

From Cherry Dunn <cherrywdunn@gmail.com>
Date Mon 3/3/2025 2:13 PM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>
Cc rroberson@house.ms.gov <rroberson@house.ms.gov>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing to support MSMS remaining at MUW. This jewel of a school has been so successful in partnership with MUW and Columbus. I talked to an MSMS student recently who said her parents would not have let her enroll if it had been anywhere else. The Legislature and MDE have not funded this school properly for 35 years. That is a disgrace. Please carefully consider this issue.

Dr. Cherry W. Dunn
Assistant Professor Emerita
Mississippi University for Women

MSMS relocation proposals.

From Tabitha Edmonson <tabitha_parks@hotmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:08 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Hi,

I am an MSMS alum from the class of 1997. I've read the proposals and feel strongly that MSMS needs to remain in Columbus on the campus of MUW. I also feel strongly that the facilities are long overdue for an update.

These students are the brightest the state has to offer. They have excelled despite the many resource limitations of underfunding as well as facilities being in disrepair. However, that said, I would send my child to Columbus on the campus of MUW without hesitation. I know (from experience) that there are still plenty of ways for very smart kids to break the rules. However, putting them on the campus of a major SEC school, with students that see more prone to party culture is a huge mistake. Having msmsers attend classes at MSU is a great option, but it should not be where they live and interact. The culture of the school is too alcohol-focused for high school students. I would say the same if it were the University of Mississippi, and even, potentially, my alma mater if the University of Southern Mississippi.

Parents are putting children in the care of adults. Children who are incredibly bright, but whose social and impulse controls are still developing. It is a recipe for disaster and I would never allow my child to attend on the campus of an SEC school.

The facilities should be repaired. We should invest in these children. It can be done.

Tabitha Edmonson
MSMS c/o 1997

Sent from my iPhone, please excuse any typos.

Relocation of MSMS

From Carey Edwards <carey.edwards@cadencebank.com>
Date Tue 3/4/2025 3:12 PM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

Good afternoon and I hope you're doing well. I'm sure you have already received lots of feedback on the possible relocation of MSMS to Starkville that is being considered. I too am writing to ask that MSMS remain in Columbus for many reasons, but most importantly, for the students themselves. While I admire Starkville and Mississippi State (I'm an MSU alum), I don't believe that some of the best and brightest students in our great State would be best served in a college town for obvious reasons.

As a resident of Columbus we take great pride in being the home of MSMS and consider it a jewel. The kids are so unbelievably talented, and I wish I had been smart enough to attend myself. I'm a product of a local public school in Columbus but MSMS has always been a shining example for the other schools in our community to emulate and model to make us all better.

Please keep MSMS in Columbus and thanks for your consideration,

Carey Edwards | Community Bank President - Columbus
Cadence Bank | 2220 Highway 45 N | Columbus, MS 39705
NMLS ID# 838072
Office: 662-243-6806 | Cell: 662-308-3187
Email: carey.edwards@cadencebank.com

NYSE: CADE

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Location of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

From John Foley <foleyjoh@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 11:47 AM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dr. Donna Boone
Chief Academic Officer
Mississippi Department of Education

Dear Dr. Boone,

As parents of an MSMS graduate, we are writing to express our strong support for keeping MSMS at MUW.

The education our daughter, Courtney, received at MSMS while it was at MUW was excellent. In addition, many of the friendships she developed there are incredibly strong and ongoing, now more than twenty years after graduation. The MSMS students form strong bonds of friendship, and we feel that this is partly attributable to the fact that MUW is a compact, friendly campus. MSMS is an integral part of the small MUW community; at Mississippi State University, it would be a tiny part of a much larger whole. MUW is just the right size to host a residential high school: large enough to expand the student's horizons but small enough not to be intimidating.

As Mississippi residents – and taxpayers – we strongly prefer that the state funds for MSMS should be used to upgrade the facilities at MUW, not reinvent the wheel at MSU.

Sincerely,
John and Harriet Foley

Move of MSMS from MUW

From Matt Furnari <mfurnari@lowndescountyms.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:47 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dr. Boone, good afternoon my name is Matt Furnari. I am the District 1 Supervisor for Lowndes County.

I want to express my concern with the possibility of MSMS being moved. First off MUW and Columbus are a much better fit for 16- and 17-year-old kids vs a big SEC campus like MSU and town like Starkville. Why are we messing with success? Also, they have had this success while being in adequately funded.

Lastly, I hope MSMS is not being used as collateral to help get certain projects funded in Oktibbeha county. This whole situation and timing just seem odd.

Respectfully MSMS does not need to be moved from the MUW campus.

Thank you for listening.

Matt

Relocation of MSMS

From Carole Givens <cgivens57@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:00 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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To Whom it may Concern:

This letter serves in STRONG SUPPORT OF MSMS TO REMAIN IN COLUMBUS.

Our youngest son, West Givens, attended MSMS and graduated in 2016. West's two years at MSMS truly changed the course of his high school years and his personal/social development and made him very well-prepared for college. West was among other like-minded peers at MSMS and the dedicated teachers were challenging and truly cared for his well-being, not just his academic advancement; MSMS was a second family. West was also exposed to outstanding English classes, American Film, drama classes and the renown 'Tales of the Crypt' class taught by the infamous, Mr. Chuck Yarborough! Tales of the Crypt is synonymous with MSMS and the town of Columbus during Spring Pilgrimage—it would be a dire shame for it to end just because of campus relocation!

I strongly support MSMS remaining on the campus of MUW.

The campus of MSMS within the W's small campus is the perfect and safe environment for a young high schooler acclimating to being on their own.

I also feel that the smaller town of Columbus adds to that perfect and safe environment.

In my opinion, relocating MSMS to the large MSU campus would not provide a safe and secure environment and would also introduce too many unhealthy temptations and distractions to the MSMS students.



CINDY EGGER GOODE
LOWNDES COUNTY CHANCERY CLERK
CGOODE@LOWNDESCOUNTYMS.COM

March 3, 2025

Dr. Donna Boone
Chief Academic Officer
Mississippi Department of Education

Dr. Boone,

I am writing this letter in support of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science remaining at the Mississippi University for Women campus.

As a life long resident of Lowndes County and an alumna of Mississippi University for Women, I understand the importance of our MSMS school remaining on campus of MUW. When I graduated from Caledonia High School, MUW afforded me the ability to work full-time and attend night classes. The campus at MUW made me feel safe and it was convenient to my needs.

It has been my experience through my personal friends and now friends' children that attended MSMS, the campus makes them feel at home and safe while allowing them to experience a little college life.

My membership with Columbus-Lowndes Chamber of Commerce, Main Street Columbus, Inc., Lowndes County Republican Women and Columbus Exchange Club have allowed me the opportunity to be a part of various activities at MUW to support the youth in Lowndes County. Lowndes County wants to educate students and these students to remain in Lowndes County to work and raise their families.

Please consider this letter of support of MSMS remaining on campus at MUW. MSMS and MUW are essential to Lowndes County and the City of Columbus. Please provide funding to support our MSMS school and leave MSMS on the campus of Mississippi University for Women. We are blessed to have them both and continue to support them in every possible way.

Thank you,
Cindy E. Goode
Cindy E. Goode
Chancery Clerk



From: **marian hazard** mhhazard@gmail.com
Subject: **MSMS**
Date: **Mar 1, 2025 at 6:15:20 PM**
To: **second-aryeducation@mdek12.org**

Mrs. Boone,

I write to you to support MSMS remaining on the MUW campus. I am a Columbus resident and live one block from the MUW campus. I so enjoy seeing the young people walk by my house as they enjoy this most recent beautiful weather and exploring downtown Columbus. It is difficult to imagine the school being else where.

The MSMS grads have had stellar scholarship awards and national rankings. This fact has been overlooked and ignored in funding by our state. These scholars who become our future have been living in less than acceptable conditions. MUW as a whole has been ignored and fallen into disrepair. Why not reward academics in the way athletics are funneled funds? MUW has a most excellent Nursing Program, the best in the state. They have fairly new facilities but the vista surrounding the Nursing Department is severely lacking.

"If you build it , they will come" is a quote from a Kevin Costner movie' "Field of Dreams". Who can imagine the impetus state money could make with physical improvements to the W campus. YES the programs and the opportunities are there but they are being offered in outdated classrooms and dorms. Can the importance of "a first impression" be ignored? In today's world sometimes a first-glance is the decision maker. The substance, the quality of education is there on the MUW campus. Can the state of Mississippi not reinforce that standard and grant the funds to elevate the physical appearance and structures to the same standards?

My son graduated from MSU and I am proud of his diploma and his years there. I support MSU but not for MSMS. On the MUW campus the MSMS students are

sequestered in an area of protection, surveillance, and privacy. The proposal for the Starkville MSU

Location of MSMS seems ill-considered for students ages 17-19. The opportunity offered for the original MSMS was a superior education to deserving youth in our state. My prayers are for the efforts of previous generations to be respected, upheld and granted the well deserved funding from our state to continue this tradition.

With respect,
Marian Hazard

MSMS Proposals Feedback

From Kayla Hester <kaylabhester75@gmail.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 7:24 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Hello Dr. Boone:

My name is Kayla Hester and this is my tenth year teaching History at The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. I would like to provide feedback on the proposals submitted to MDE on the future of MSMS, with special focus on the proposal submitted by Mississippi State University.

I am a Mississippi State alumnus, and I have great affinity and respect for that institution and the city of Starkville (where I still live and where my own children go to school). Because of this, I was very disappointed in the proposal submitted by MSU. I know a potential move to MSU could offer some benefits to our students. However, in my opinion, the prospect of combining us with Starkville-Oktibbeha School District (or any other school district) completely flies in the face of the purpose of MSMS and the reasons it has been so successful over its 38 year history.

Our students come to MSMS for many reasons, including increased academic rigor, the ability to take more advanced courses, and future scholarship opportunities. But from my conversations with students over the past ten years, one of the biggest reasons many come to MSMS is for the community. Often at their home schools, they are marginalized for being "the smart kid" or bullied for not quite fitting in. At MSMS, they get to feel at home among a cohort of high-achieving and motivated students who support each others' goals. This facilitates a learning environment that is unmatched and allows these students to thrive in a way that many could not in their home high school. And their success benefits us all, with our alumni going on to become leaders in their fields and valuable assets to our communities, state, and nation. Our MSMS community is something truly special, and I fear that will get lost if we join with another high school.

I also strongly believe this proposal will put the future of the school in jeopardy. If we fail to maintain MSMS, it will not only be a disservice to our state's gifted students, but, considering the great achievements of our students, it will be a detriment to our state as a whole.

I urge you to please listen to the many MSMS employees, students, and alumni who are certainly communicating this same sentiment to you.

Sincerely,
Kayla Hester

Please Keep MSMS at MUW in Columbus!

From Tori <tori.linville94@gmail.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 11:57 AM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

My name is Tori Hopper, and I am writing this message on behalf of my concern for the ongoing conversations about relocating the Mississippi School for Math and Science. While I work at the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library as the children's and teen librarian, I am sending this message as a personal stakeholder in the success of MSMS as well.

On a bimonthly basis, MSMS students volunteer their time to assist Columbus and Lowndes County students with our Reading Buddies program. This program was proposed by MSMS students themselves and brought to the library as a potential collaboration effort, which we heartily joined. MSMS students can conveniently walk or catch a ride to the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library where they meet with their reading buddy: a K-5 student who is struggling with reading skill development from sight words and phonemics to comprehension and literary element identification.

Without MSMS, this program would not exist in our community, and the dozens of children who have benefitted from the program would not have a newfound confidence in reading without these dedicated MSMS students. For example, Samara T. was a struggling reader who was not meeting her Accelerated Reader goal for her third-grade class, and with encouragement and help from her MSMS reading buddy, she was able to achieve her AR goal.

Additionally, MSMS students also use the library for their Math Outreach program, where they illustrate the benefits of mathematics and apply mathematical principles to a wide variety of activities to engage students of all ages and stages.

Lastly, I have benefitted from MSMS and its legacy as an adult as well. Without MSMS, I would not have the opportunity to establish relationships and community with Emily Liner and her staff at Friendly City Books. Emily attended MSMS as a student and returned to our area to open the only bookstore in Columbus, MS. The only other option for reading material outside of Emily's store is a limited Walmart selection or an Amazon purchase that does not benefit our local economy. Emily's interest in collaborating with the library has seen a great partnership with story times, book clubs, and the like, but as a personal customer of Emily's, I recognize none of this would likely have come about without her time spent in Columbus, MS where she fondly spent two years attending MSMS as a student.

I encourage the allocation of the necessary funding to keep MSMS in Columbus, MS at the Mississippi University for Women, as these students play an integral part of our community in more ways than one.

Thank you for your time.

--

Tori L. Hopper, MLIS

Children's & Teen Librarian

Aspiring Velocireader

662-889-6952

torihopper.com

Currently Reading

 [Book Cover](#)

An Email of Concern for the Future of MSMS

From Squeak Humphrey <squeak628@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:40 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

Thank you for taking the time to read this email. I am contacting you in regards to the MUW/MSU MSMS proposals, and while I do not have kids attending MSMS, my husband is a faculty member of MSMS. I believe that moving MSMS to Mississippi State would be detrimental for MSMS and the culture it has formed in Columbus with MUW. There are several reasons why I believe it is a bad decision. I would like to share them with you now.

The Tales from the Crypt performances that occur during the spring have garnered national attention, and the Tales program has even had a documentary filmed about it. This program has flourished for years at the W, and has helped with the tourism of Columbus. Moving MSMS would not only damage that program, but it would also financially damage the City of Columbus. Over the past 5 years, "Tales" has raised over \$30,000 USD for charity. It has also provided the students ways to make significant contributions to the local community. If MSMS moved, that program would be shut down permanently, and an incredible tradition of honoring our state's history would end.

Safety is another concern when it comes to moving MSMS. Since this proposal has been announced, it has been a common topic of conversation for the people of Columbus. Safety has been their biggest concern for moving the students, and many have said that if MSMS was on MSU's campus they would never send their kids to the school. From 2019, MSU has reported an increase of sexual misconduct. State is a large campus, with many fraternities on said campus. High school age kids do not need to have access to these parties. Kids are clever, and tend to think they know how to handle themselves. They will find ways into fraternity parties if they are given close proximity to them.

MSMS has been a safe haven for kids who are different. It has offered them a place of like-minded people and community. Moving the school would be detrimental to the people that matter most in this situation: the students. Because of the size of MUW's campus, MSMS is able to provide their students with an intimate classroom setting. The faculty are able to provide more time for each student if it is needed. Not every student can handle a large classroom setting, and the ones that need the most help have the risk of slipping through the gaps. Students need to have the space to feel like individuals, and be more than the numbers of a test score.

Thank you for taking the time to read my email. Please consider the people that matter most while making this decision. Every student deserves the chance for success, and MSMS has provided that

chance for many students since it's beginning. It will continue to do so if it is being given the right conditions.

Thank you for your time,
Brit Humphrey, partner of MSMS faculty member

MSMS Proposal Feedback

From Morenike Irving <morenike.f.irving@gmail.com>
Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:55 PM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Boone,

I am writing to express my unwavering support for the proposal submitted by Mississippi University for Women (MUW) to continue and expand its longstanding partnership with the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS). This partnership has fostered academic excellence for 37 years and plays a vital role in addressing one of Mississippi's most pressing challenges: the outmigration of its talented youth, commonly referred to as the "brain drain." This proposal directly addresses this challenge by implementing new strategies to provide a nurturing, resource-rich environment for MSMS students, empowering them to thrive academically and envision a future within Mississippi.

MUW's commitment to enriching MSMS students' education is evident through its comprehensive dual-credit program, the expansion of course offerings, and tuition waivers that make collegiate-level learning accessible. MUW and MSMS have created a Master Plan to address the school's needs without disrupting students or the academic year. Unfortunately, funding is woefully inadequate. It is important to note that an operational budget that matches those of neighboring states like Alabama, Louisiana, and Arkansas would better position the school for success and longevity.

The collaboration envisioned in this proposal—encompassing mentorship programs, innovative academic certificates, and expanded research opportunities—ensures that MSMS students are positioned to lead academically and become engaged, well-rounded contributors to society. I am particularly excited about the opportunity for MSMS students to experience a state-of-the-art AI laboratory. Careers in artificial intelligence are projected to grow 21% from 2021 to 2031, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Access to an advanced AI laboratory allows MSMS students to engage directly with cutting-edge technology, fostering practical skills in machine learning, data analytics, and computational modeling. This experience is invaluable, as it aligns with the skills that employers in the growing AI sector seek.

While relocating MSMS to Mississippi State University (MSU) is under consideration, MUW holds a significant advantage due to its smaller size. The university is better equipped to meet the unique needs of MSMS students and allows them to continue enjoying a "hometown feel." Students are never more than five minutes from their classrooms, dining hall, library, and recreational facilities, which enables them to focus on their academic pursuits without the distractions often found on larger campuses. Although MSU may provide broader resources, the trade-offs of disrupting a proven, fiscally responsible model to start anew in another location would result in unnecessary financial and logistical challenges.

I urge you to support this proposal and ensure that MSMS students continue to benefit from the unparalleled advantages of living and learning at MUW. This would allow MDE to focus on investing more funds into an educational model that retains and nurtures Mississippi's best and brightest, preparing them for a future of influence and service within our state.

Sincerely,

Morenike Irving

MSMS 2003

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"Success means doing the best we can with what we have. Success is the doing, not the getting; in the trying, not the triumph. Success is a personal standard, reaching for the highest that is in us, becoming all that we can be."

Re: MSMS

From Robert Ivy <ivyarchitect234@gmail.com>
Date Tue 3/4/2025 2:40 PM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Boone:

Mississippi School for Math and Science has been a magnet for bringing quality young people to Columbus. If for no other reason, we need to retain the school for its gifts back to our own city. Today, examining a brief roster of former students, we find one of Columbus's leading young physicians, the owner of our exemplary bookstore, and many others. After years away at universities and in initial employment, they were drawn back to the community that fed their intellectual development and provided a green and sheltering environment. Columbus has that magnetic power. Additionally, the school has brought teachers and administrators who have been likewise attracted to Columbus—a city rich with literary, artistic, architectural, and intellectual accomplishments.

We must not lose this power. MSMS has been overlooked by the legislature for too long and is deserving of attention and resources. At the same time, we should all unite in trumpeting its incalculable worth to our own city and county. Keep MSMS where it belongs.

Robert Ivy, FAIA

Robert Ivy
Design Advocate/Architect/Educator

(202) 527-0080
robert-ivy.com



My support for MSMS remaining at MUW

From Bertram Jenkins <bertram.jenkins@outlook.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:14 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dr. Boone - Please make your best effort to keep MSMS at MUW. In my opinion, that would be in the best interest of MSMS students and MS taxpayers. Thanks.

Bertram Jenkins
1400 Briarwood Circle
Columbus, MS 39705
Phone 662-251-1111

Request to leave MSMS @ MUW

From Debbie Jenkins <debbiegjenkins@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:23 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone:

Please try to keep MSMS at MUW. MSMS students and taxpayers would benefit more from continuing the MSMS/MUW partnership than any potential relocation benefits. Thank you.

Debra Jenkins
1400 Briarwood Circle
Columbus, MS 39705
Phone 662-328-0441

Comments on MSMS Proposals

From William Johnson <wlpj2011@gmail.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 9:43 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

To whom it may concern,

I am William Johnson, a graduate of the MSMS class of 2018. I feel strongly that MSMS should remain at MUW, as MUW has shown that it has the capability to support MSMS and its students while providing a level of safety not possible at MSU. More importantly, I think the best way for MSMS to continue to provide a high standard of education for the young people of Mississippi is for MSMS to be fully funded for the necessary renovations and the education for all students who are chosen to attend.

Sincerely,
William Johnson

Support of MUW's proposal for MSMS to remain on the MUW campus

From Melanie Jolly <melanie.jolly@dcsms.org>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 12:08 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Boone:

Greetings! I am writing in support of MSMS remaining in its current location on the campus of MUW in Columbus. My husband and I both graduated from MSMS in the mid-1990's, and we have a son who hopes to attend MSMS next school year. While I personally have very fond memories of my time at MSMS on The W's campus, as a parent, I have concerns about the safety of MSMS students if the campus were to be relocated to MSU. The W's campus is the ideal size for high school students to navigate. Furthermore, the campus life of The W is much more appropriate for housing high school students. An SEC school on football weekends, especially, is not the place for students, ages 16-18!

I am also a high school teacher with over 20 years experience. I do not believe it is a good idea to expand enrollment to include high school sophomores. In my experience, I have noticed a marked difference in the maturity level between 10th graders and 11th graders. I do not feel most 10th graders are quite ready to make the leap of living away from home at that age.

Please consider providing adequate funding to retain MSMS at MUW to ensure facilities meet the needs of students there.

Melanie Jolly
Latin and Mississippi Writers Teacher
Student Council Sponsor
Horn Lake High School

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Sue Jolly, PhD
Dean Emerita and Professor of Education Emerita
sjolysmith@gmail.com

March 3, 2025

Dr. Donna Boone
secondaryeducation@mdek12.org

RE: Public comment regarding the location of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

Dear Dr. Boone:

Thank you for providing this opportunity for public feedback regarding the proposals for the location of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science.

In the 1980s, as a young teacher of gifted high school students, I was privileged to witness the work of forward minded Mississippi legislators along with Mississippi University for Women professors and administrators with expertise in gifted education. As you are aware, during this decade of significant educational reform in our state, they crafted the foundations for the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science and with its creation, Mississippi became one of the first states to establish a public residential school for intellectually gifted students. The success of the many graduates speaks to the success of this school over the years. A number of factors have been addressed in public forums as well as through comments you are likely to receive, and I agree with many of those comments. However, I would like to limit my feedback to two critical concerns that should be foremost in the discussion, decisions, and recommendations that the Mississippi State Board of Education makes regarding the future of MSMS.

The **first** consideration should be the primary mission of the school in addressing the unique needs of the intellectually gifted students the school is designed to serve. Intellectually gifted students flourish in an environment in which they can interact with peers who are similar. While at MSMS, often for the first time in their educational history, they encounter classmates with whom they feel they can truly be themselves. While the balanced curriculum at MSMS is accelerated, it also engages the students to a depth and breadth that develops their creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving. Housing, safety, and other support resources are important considerations but the primary mission of the school is its role in providing a challenging high school academic experience. The awards and successes of the school in its current location speak to its success over time in achieving this mission. The curriculum is provided by able faculty who understand the maturity level of high school students as well as how to challenge their intellect.

Secondly, one factor strongly debated during the school's establishment regarded governance. MSMS was created to serve Mississippi students from all parts of the state. At establishment, it was strongly felt that any association or perceived association with one school district could weaken its autonomy and its ability to serve students statewide. This was initially resolved when the school was placed under the direct authority of the Mississippi State Board of Education. I feel a strong concern that association with any one high school or school district risks weakening and eroding the school's primary mission.

Through the years, I have had multiple opportunities to interact with faculty, students, and administrators at MSMS. During my tenure at MUW, I experienced the way that the school and the university functioned both separately and collaboratively. As a professor and administrator at both Delta State University and MUW, I worked with colleagues from all eight public universities and through that work gained appreciation, respect, and understanding for the diverse missions of all eight public institutions. I have earned degrees from both MUW and MSU, and thus have loyalty to both. The location of MSMS at MUW is a sound fit with the mission of MUW.

During the interceding years since its creation in 1987, MSMS has fulfilled and exceeded its mission to provide the intellectual and academic challenges to some of Mississippi's most capable high school students. The school has done so on the MUW campus, and I urge the board to recommend continuation on the MUW campus and to seek necessary state funding to provide updated residence halls and other resources for continued success. Thank you for your leadership and for your thoughtful consideration of this important and far-reaching decision. I will be glad to provide further discussion from my perspective as a career educator.

Sincerely,

Sue Jolly, PhD
Dean Emerita and Professor of Education Emerita, Mississippi University for Women

Email Copies:

Representative Andy Boyd; Mr. Glen East, Chair, MS State Board of Education; Representative Kabir Karriem; Representative Dana McLean; MUW President Nora Miller; Senator Chuck Younger

MSMS relocation, please don't!

From Pam Jones <mamajones29@yahoo.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 3:35 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Secondary Education Director,

I hope this message finds you well. I am writing to you as a retired secondary teacher with love and concern for our educational community in Mississippi. I feel compelled to express my strong opposition to the proposed relocation of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS) and to advocate for increased funding to enhance its current facilities

The majority of students who attend not only attend but thrive at MSMS, with many earning full scholarships to prestigious universities. The success stories of many students speak volumes about the transformative impact of this institution.

Parents have consistently expressed their appreciation for MSMS being situated on the W campus, viewing it as an ideal stepping stone to larger universities. The transition from a small town of 4,000 to a larger city of 20,000 is already significant for these young students. Moving MSMS to a campus with 20,000 students would only complicate their adjustment, potentially overwhelming them during a critical period of their development.

Instead of relocating MSMS, I urge you to consider investing in the existing facilities in Columbus. By allocating a portion of the funds that would be used for the move to retrofit and modernize the MSMS dorms and classrooms, we can create a state-of-the-art environment that continues to nurture and challenge our brightest students. This approach not only preserves the integrity of a school that has earned national recognition as one of the top 12 in the country but also represents a more fiscally responsible decision for taxpayers.

Mississippi has long struggled with educational rankings, and MSMS stands as a beacon of hope and achievement. Let us build on this success rather than risk dismantling it. I implore you to reconsider the proposed move and to prioritize the funding necessary to enhance MSMS in its current location.

Thank you for your attention to this critical matter. I hope you will join me in advocating for the future of MSMS and the students it serves.

Sincerely,
Pam Jones

MSMS Proposal

From jennifer Kilgore <jbgmckk@gmail.com>
Date Thu 2/27/2025 6:26 AM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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I am not in favor of moving the MSMS campus to Mississippi State University, Starkville, MS area. It is my feeling that the students are in a better environment with a smaller campus to navigate at that particular stage in their lives. It gives them the opportunity to grow and develop their own individual personalities where they get a more specific-type attention on a more personalized level rather than become one more student among thousands. There is also history on The W campus and a matter of pride for those who come back to say this is where it all began in their bigger picture of development for the world. The one on one attention of a smaller group setting always outweighs being just one of a crowd. They will get that when they choose the college of their choice the following years. The W will give them an opportunity they would have at no other place-specializes attention only for them for two years, geared to give them their best chance as a young adult before they have to be 'main-streamed' completely as full adults in the competitive world among thousands, on their own. This is a chance to thrive and be their very best without that 'other piece of worldly pressure'. I say Mississippi has an extraordinary program in place that is the envy of other States, let's just make it better where it is.

Mississippi University for Women is already geared for this, thrives on this, the students love this and it's the best financial choice so why is it even on the table?

Let MSMS stay home where it belongs, at the W.

Jennifer Kilgore

MSMS should stay at MUW

From Greta Koshenina <grkoshenina@gmail.com>
Date Thu 2/27/2025 8:50 AM
To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dear Dr. Boone,

I hope this email finds you well. I am a 2016 graduate of MSMS, and I feel it would be a mistake to move the high school to Mississippi State's campus. MUW provides a safe and secluded environment that I do not believe MSU could offer. MUW's campus and student population is better suited for a group of teenagers who have just left home for the first time. I cannot imagine what would have ensued if I had been on a major SEC campus when I was only 16. This was perhaps the most formative time in my life, and I was able to fully immerse myself within the MSMS community. I feel this would drastically change with a move.

I believe a move to MSU would create distraction and unsafe encounters with fraternity parties and the like. As a woman, I fear for teenage girls safety on such a large campus when they are still children. MUW enforces strict social measures in regards to keeping high school and college students separated. I do not believe this would be possible nor enforced on MSU's campus.

Columbus and MUW are part of the fabric of MSMS, and it would completely change the environment of the residential high school and community.

I have seen other calls that hold a similar sentiment as me, and I hope these accounts are greatly considered when discussing the future of MSMS. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to experience MSMS, and I cannot imagine it happening or being possible anywhere else.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

All the best,
Greta Koshenina

MFA Candidate
Center for the Study of Southern Culture
University of Mississippi

MSMS Public Comments

From Kim Laird <laird.kk@gmail.com>

Date Thu 2/27/2025 11:11 AM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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Dr. Boone:

I graduated from MUW, and my husband graduated from MSU. We have lived in Starkville for the past 11 years. MSMS belongs at MUW, where it has thrived for so many years. The smaller campus and makeup of the student body are more appropriate for high school age children than the large MSU campus.

The State needs to do its part to ensure that facilities are in good repair and adequate to the needs of the MSMS students on the MUW campus, as it should for any public school in Mississippi. Moving the entire operation to Starkville is not economically efficient for the taxpayers of Mississippi or in the best interests of these young students.

Thank you for considering my comments.

Kimberlee Laird
Starkville, Mississippi

MSMS location comments

From Shawn Lawrence <shawn.lawrence@icloud.com>

Date Mon 3/3/2025 6:40 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

CAUTION: This email originated from outside of the MDE organization. Do not click links or open attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Dear Dr. Boone:

I am writing with comments regarding the location proposals for MSMS. As a graduate of MSMS, class of 1991, I can speak to the value of this educational experience as my first big scientific step in a career that included doing original research in the Chemistry Department at Mississippi State University.

Subsequently I have obtained my PhD from the Johns Hopkins University and have become a vice president of process development at a major biotechnology company that has developed treatments for diseases that many Mississippians have benefited from including blindness and COVID.

It seems clear that the state of Mississippi will need to allocate resources in either location. I believe, with a reasonable level of conviction, that MUW is the more conducive location for the school and is where I would prefer to send my children. However, I ultimately think this comes down to the stability of MUW as a university, which is by many accounts nearing the edge of enrollment viability and trending in the wrong direction. The worst case scenario would be the forced closing of MSMS if MUW as the result of a MUW closure. The politics and likelihood of this eventuality I leave to you and the state legislature.

Shawn Lawrence, PhD
MSMS Class of 1991

Sent from my iPhone