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## MSU-MUW Proposal

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**From** Liliane Burgoyne <burgoynel26@themsms.org>

**Date** Tue 3/4/2025 2:07 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### **External Email**

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Good evening, Dr. Boone,

My name is Evan Burgoyne. I am a Junior at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science, and I previously attended Olive Branch High School in DeSoto County. The state of the public school system, particularly in Mississippi, is an issue I care about deeply. In fact, I wrote one of my entrance essays to MSMS about education reform, so it's safe to say that I've thought a lot about the proposals from MUW and MSU. I've read through both in their entirety, and I have quite a few thoughts I would like to share. I firmly believe that MSMS should stay at MUW, and I believe that the reasons I will share with you are the reasons why most of the student and faculty population of MSMS agree with me.

The concept of historic connection and tradition as a reason MSMS should stay at MUW has been brought up many times in discussions about the move. I firmly agree, but I think the school is intrinsically tied not only to MUW, but the city of Columbus itself. For example, consider the Tales from the Crypt class, which I am enrolled in. Each student selects a research subject that is connected to Columbus. Often these subjects are buried in Friendship Cemetery, which is only a five-minute drive from the MUW campus. Students gather information on these subjects from the Columbus-Lowndes Public Library, which is just a fifteen-minute walk from MSMS. Or in the case of a student having an MUW-related research subject, the Beulah Culbertson archives in Fant Memorial Library at MUW. The convenience of these locations is what makes Tales such a successful class. I'm sure there are libraries near MSU, but the location MSU has proposed they will place us will not allow Tales research to occur at the student's own pace. Buses will be necessary to transport students to a library with sufficient archival information, and that is assuming that Tales would even be considered worth the effort. Tales from the Crypt is nationally recognized and is one of the most successful classes at MSMS because of where we are located. Not only will a relocation make it difficult to continue this project, but it would take MSMS students away from the local events that occur in downtown Columbus. Wassail fest, Columbus Arts Council events, and other local gatherings and festivities are regularly attended by MSMS students because downtown Columbus is just a fifteen-minute walk away. Notably, MSMS students feel safe signing out to walk with their friends to the Coffeehouse on 5th and Zachary's restaurant because Columbus is a safe, tight-knit community. Starkville is a wonderful city, but MSMS students would not simply be able to walk to downtown Starkville in a reasonable time frame, and the larger population may take away some of the safe, family-like atmosphere that Columbus has.

I've spoken to other MSMS students about the proposals, and one common topic that is brought up by the majority of MSMS students is how Starkville High will be effectively combined with MSMS. The

classes at MSMS are extremely academically rigorous. Every student has essentially a full college workload. This works, however, because when we applied, we all had an idea of what we were in for. We worked hard on grades, ACT scores, and application essays in order to be accepted to this school. If Starkville High is combined with MSMS and SHS students are allowed to enroll in MSMS courses, that negates the effort MSMS students put in to be able to take those difficult classes. My fellow MSMS students and I have expressed frustration at this concept, because it feels to us as if SHS will receive benefits they didn't work as hard as us to earn. Additionally, many MSMS students applied not only to gain academic experience, but to be surrounded by other like-minded individuals. Every student at MSMS is here because we care about learning, and because we want to be here. If SHS students, who have no choice but to attend school, are mixed in, the community that makes up one of the four pillars of MSMS' core values will be irreversibly altered, and nobody I've spoken to thinks it would be changed for the better.

On a personal note, MSMS has changed my life. At Olive Branch, I was not academically challenged, and although it is a good school for many students, I had little hope for my academic future. MSMS has renewed my sense of determination and helped me rediscover my aspirations and develop plans for the future. I've considered what the MSMS experience would be like if MSU's proposed plans were implemented, and I do not believe this would be the case if I had experienced MSMS under those conditions. It is because of the community that MSMS is so effective for students like me. Altering the community that has been built for nearly 40 years would take away what is, in my opinion, the most important MSMS principle. We could benefit from more funding, but uprooting our school and planting us in unfamiliar soil will not solve the monetary issues we face.

I implore you to consider my voice and the voices of my fellow students. MSMS is our home, so Columbus is too. MSMS would not be the same if it is not with MUW. So instead of moving us to MSU, a solution that would only solve problems that aren't MSMS', keep us at home, where we belong, and help provide solutions to *our* monetary problems.

Thank you for your consideration,

Evan Burgoyne

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**MSMS Proposals - Support of MUW**

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**From** Michael Callahan <callahan@ecm.coop>

**Date** Tue 3/4/2025 2:44 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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As a parent of an MSMS graduate, Victoria Callahan, class of 2021, I want to write in favor of the MUW proposal. The MUW campus allows for a more controlled environment for the MSMS students but still gives them the freedom to enjoy a scenic campus. MSU has always been an overly large campus and might seem intimidating for 15–17-year-olds. Also, the proposed location is quite far from the main campus, thereby giving the students a feeling of being isolated. Also, there is a concern among MSMS alumni and parent that the school would become part of the SOCSO and not maintain its independence.

MSMS is an incredible school and should be given the resources it needs to continue its mission of educating Mississippi's brightest high school students.

Michael Callahan  
Executive VP/ CEO  
Electric Cooperatives of Mississippi  
601-605-8605 – direct line



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**MSMS Proposal - Input from a Starkville native, MSMS alumna, and current public school educator**

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**From** Joy Cariño <joycarinyo@gmail.com>

**Date** Tue 3/4/2025 4:58 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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Good evening!

I am submitting my comments to the Mississippi Department of Education about the proposals for the future of the Mississippi School for Math & Science (MSMS). My name is Joy Cariño, and I am currently an 8th grade math teacher at the West Point Consolidated School District. I am an alumna of MSMS (class of 2016) and alumna of Mississippi State University (class of 2020). I am a Starkville native, attended Starkville High School for two years, and I even taught one year as an Interventionist at Armstrong Middle School and the Partnership School (where MSU proposes to place MSMS:E). I am a proud product of this state's public school system, and I love my job as a teacher, getting to teach MATH! I love teaching students the excitement that comes with problem solving, math modeling, critical thinking, and more. I love helping students get excited for math, and see their self-confidence grow as young mathematicians and leaders for this state.

I owe much of my career and my love for Mississippi to my education at the Mississippi School of Math & Science, on the MUW campus. **I urge my legislators and representatives to let MSMS remain at the W, where it's been successful for the past 37 years.** I take this stance for the following reasons:

**1. Tax-payer dollars should be used for MSMS students who come from all over the state--not to fund Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District.** MSU's proposal to move MSMS next to the Partnership school *and* build new facilities for Starkville High is not cost-efficient, nor is it fair for the state of Mississippi. MSMS should remain a *Mississippi-wide* school, since all students in the state of Mississippi may apply to attend. MUW's proposal to update MSMS dorm facilities would cost \$35 million, and classroom facilities would cost \$25 million (total \$60 million). However, MSU's proposal would require \$85 million from the state. (source: Emma Mcrae Columbus Dispatch). Why should state-wide tax payers pay for a school in Starkville, which will educate Starkville residents?

**2. Cost-Efficiency** - MSMS already provides a quality education--despite being underfunded with dorm facilities and academic facilities in decline. MSMS does not need to move; it needs full funding to support its facilities that house students and faculty. The MUW proposal even states that "MSMS has 164,519 dedicated square footage; the maintenance fee calculates to 69 cents per square foot, well short of the \$6.00 per square foot recommended by the Association of Physical Plant Administrators standards." Even though MSMS is currently underfunded, the school and community are able to provide a quality education. I was able to attend MSU all four years on a full-tuition

scholarship thanks to the opportunities I had at MSMS, and I had classmates receive full-tuition scholarships to Ole Miss as well. Seeing how much MSMS students have excelled with an underfunded high school, if the school is fully funded, these students WILL thrive, be healthy, and give back to their Mississippi communities.

**3. Student Safety** - Part of MSMS being able to give their students a quality education is the small, tight-knit community of the W. Students are always within walking distance of dorms, classes, the dining hall, and there are structures in place to maintain their safety when going to MUW buildings for music or art classes. Having MSMS on a large SEC school would make it much easier to get involved with MSU students, the large fraternity & sorority houses, the football games when thousands of people pour into Starkville, and others. I am so glad I had my education on the W campus, away from the hustle and bustle that I saw everyday when I was in college at MSU.

I have experienced life at Starkville High School, MSMS, MSU, and the Partnership School. I know that the best place for MSMS students is the MUW campus. Remaining on the W campus is also the most cost-efficient and fair choice for stakeholders and Mississippi taxpayers. For these reasons and for students' well-being and education, please vote to adequately fund MSMS on the MUW campus.

Best,  
Joy Cariño

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## MSMS Student Opinion on MUW vs. MSU Proposals

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From Rebekah Carter <carterr26@themsms.org>

Date Fri 2/28/2025 7:35 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### External Email

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### To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Rebekah Carter, and I am currently a junior at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS). After reviewing the proposals from Mississippi University for Women (MUW) and Mississippi State University (MSU) regarding the future of MSMS, I feel compelled to express my concerns. Since its founding, MSMS has thrived at MUW, offering opportunities that were unavailable at my previous school in Purvis, Mississippi. MSMS provides a unique and competitive educational environment that students across the state aspire to join.

MSU's proposal to allow Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District (SOCSD) students to enroll in MSMS courses directly undermines the entire purpose of MSMS. Renaming the school to MSMS:E and integrating SOCSD students diminishes our identity and mission. MSU claims this change would offer MSMS students a more "normal" high school experience, but that is precisely what applicants seek to avoid. Students come to MSMS for an academically rigorous, specialized experience—not a traditional high school setting.

If SOCSD students gain access to MSMS courses, the exclusivity and prestige of our school will erode. This will discourage students from across the state from applying, as the incentive to relocate for an education distinct from their local schools will disappear. Additionally, the disparity in academic expectations between MSMS and a traditional high school will create unfair advantages and challenges for both MSMS students and SOCSD students.

Another major concern is athletics. MSU's proposal to merge MSMS sports with SOCSD teams disregards the balance we currently maintain between academics and extracurricular activities. At MSMS, there is an unspoken understanding among teachers and coaches that academics come first. SOCSD coaches and students may not share this perspective, leading to conflicts when MSMS students prioritize studying over practice. The pressures and expectations placed on student-athletes at a traditional high school will not align with MSMS's academic culture.

Additionally, MSMS has been located in Columbus for over 25 years, yet Columbus High School has never had access to MSMS courses. This raises the question—why should SOCSD be granted access while CHS never has? Columbus played a significant role in securing MSMS's original funding, and if the community were to rally again, we could potentially secure the resources needed to update the MSMS campus at MUW.

Relocating to MSU would also present serious safety and logistical issues. The proposed location—near a highway in an open field—poses risks. Starkville experiences more crime than Columbus, and the college environment at MSU is not appropriate for high school students. My mother told me that if MSMS were to move to MSU's campus while I went here then I would not be able to attend MSMS my senior year. I know many other students whose parents said something similar as well. Furthermore, the placement of MSMS facilities at MSU would isolate students, requiring a shuttle to reach campus amenities, whereas MUW

provides a walkable, accessible environment. Which many students here utilize, myself included. Downtime after school is very important and when there isn't much of a place to walk or go then my anxiety would increase so much more. The ability to walk downtown and take breaks from academics is crucial for mental health, and the proposed relocation would limit this significantly.

MSMS needs more funding but going towards the budget MSU has offered will not help us in our academic concerns. Our academics will most likely go down because we will be joined with a residential high school. We must not look at the price tag that is in our faces but at the academics and grades MSMS brings to Mississippi. The residential high school joined with the normal high school in Brookhaven with MSA works because MSA focuses on the arts and the students take their normal classes with Brookhaven high. This would not work with MSMS because the exceptional courses my school offers are math, science, history, and English. These courses are all required by MDE so joining us with SOCSO would defeat every purpose of our school. It would not work because it could also cause animosity between each students in the schools, MSMS students pay \$1,000 a year to get to MSMS as well as the vetting process we go through. It seems with MSU's plan that the SOCSO student would not have to do anything to take our classes.

MSMS has thrived despite insufficient funding for years, yet compared to our sister schools nationwide, we lag behind in scholarships and facilities. MUW has consistently supported us—our music building, for example, was provided at no cost for MSMS. The deteriorating dormitories, Goen and Frazier, require extensive renovations costing approximately \$22 million each. Rather than relocating, investing in new residence halls at MUW would be a far better solution.

Additionally, MSU's proposal to have MSMS students share cafeteria facilities with SOCSO is concerning. MSMS students require high-quality meals to sustain the rigorous academic workload, and a typical high school meal plan would not suffice. Many students, myself included, would likely avoid the cafeteria altogether due to concerns about nutrition and quality.

While MUW's proposal could be improved, the support they have provided MSMS over the years is undeniable. Strengthening our partnership with MUW, rather than relocating, would be the best path forward. If you are willing to consider proposals from both MUW and MSU, why not open the opportunity to other institutions as well? The University of Southern Mississippi, Ole Miss, Delta State, Jackson State, and other state universities could also present proposals, offering a broader perspective on what is best for MSMS.

Moving MSMS to MSU would diminish the unique opportunities our school provides and compromise its mission. I urge you to reconsider this proposal and focus on preserving the integrity and success of MSMS—not just the financial aspects.

Sincerely,

**Rebekah Grace Carter**

MSMS Class of 2026

Soccer Team 24-25

"My hope is that when I die, all of hell rejoices that I am out of the fight."

C.S. Lewis

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## MUW and MSU Proposal for the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science

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**From** Jazmyn Clark <clarkj26@themsms.org>

**Date** Fri 2/28/2025 6:13 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### External Email

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Good Evening,

My name is Jazmyn Clark, and I am currently a junior at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science (MSMS). I am writing to express my strong belief that MSMS should not be relocated to the Mississippi State University (MSU) campus.

The purpose of MSMS is to offer students rigorous coursework and the opportunity to develop independence. Relocating the school to MSU would shift the focus away from these core values, ultimately undermining the essence of what makes MSMS unique. Instead of fostering an environment suited to the needs of MSMS students, such a move would place them in a setting more suited to the needs of MSU and Starkville High School, which would not benefit our students. In contrast, the Mississippi University for Women offers a setting that would more efficiently support the ideals of community, service, creativity, and scholarship that are fundamental to the identity of MSMS.

If the needs of MSMS were truly a priority, the state would invest the necessary resources to improve the current campus and dormitory facilities, ensuring that MSMS can continue to thrive without being relocated.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Jazmyn Clark.

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## MSMS Student Regarding MSU and MUW Proposal

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**From** Israel Cecil <cecili26@themsms.org>

**Date** Tue 3/4/2025 12:19 AM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### **External Email**

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MSU's proposal is significantly worse than MUW's proposal, mainly because MSMS will be dissolved into a Starkville expansion instead of a separate entity. MSMS students moved to MSMS to get out of the normal public school system. Accepting MSU's proposal would destroy the 37 years of work and collaboration, which has proven to work, the W and MSMS have achieved.

I'll only mention this briefly, but MSU did not put in enough effort in their infrastructure. If they did, then they would have noticed the swastika building that is supposedly is going to be MSMS: E's building of learning. This is slight hate and a significant oversight in MSU's planning, but I'll try to digress from hateful comments in the rest of this letter.

The W's proposal gives MSMS students access to the Plymouth Bluff Environmental Center, the Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, Academic Certificates, Ina E. Gordy Honors College, and Saturday Institute to help enrich MSMS student's education. This doesn't include the many spaces and programs that the W already provides to MSMS free of charge.

The MSU proposal claims to give (I say "claim" as this has not happened before) students access to tuition waivers for dual credit classes, which the W already provides, professors of the arts, which may be cool if the W already didn't already have certain programs that students at MSMS go to already, free Wi-Fi, research labs, which the W also proposes to expand on the labs they already give and mentorship students may still attend MSU if a program is not provided on the W's campus, a college library, which the W already gives to MSMS students, and agreements for coursework, which I don't know how to interpret as so my comments will stay silent for the last one.

The history of MSMS being on the W's campus already shows how these programs have worked in the past and with sufficient funding for MSMS, which is significantly underfunded, MSMS can provide more students with programs they are interested in and fix the old buildings, mitigating safety concerns.

The resident life section is interesting in both proposals, as MSMS needs new resident halls, but the safety of MSMS students cannot be guaranteed on a campus over 40 times larger than the W and in a community that is not as familiar with MSMS as Columbus. Some MSMS alumnus stay in Columbus, and they make a change in Columbus, like Friendly City Books, a bookstore that has at least 3 MSMS alums as workers. These alumni help shape MSMS students and give them a sense of what other years of MSMS felt like.

The money in both proposals is also a massive difference, MSMS's budget at the W stands at \$271400, according to the W's proposal, but MSU wants to use around \$170 million to create the space for MSMS: E. That is a lot of investment for a school that has already been proven to work elsewhere, in Columbus.

There are a lot of moving parts to these proposals, but MSMS's autonomy, longevity, and safety are the things that should be most important to not just the Legislature, but to the entirety of Mississippi who may send their child(ren) to MSMS. This is a school of culture shock you can't experience unless you attend the school. The students come out differently than when they came in and with a significant number of opportunities outside of Mississippi. If MSU's proposal were to be accepted, then a large snowball would hit MSMS and leave it as an extension of Starkville High School. Children attend MSMS to leave the normal high school system, not go to a different district in hopes of a new start. MSMS is not a Starkville High extension, it should never be a Starkville High extension.

I encourage both the reader of this letter and the Legislature to hear the voices of MSMS's students and to not let MSMS become fused and forgotten in Starkville. Rather, to give MSMS the funding it deserves and continue to give Mississippi's "best and brightest" their continued different high school experience in Columbus, MS.

Sincerely,

Israel Cecil

*MSMS Class of 2026*

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**Student Comment - MSMS Proposals by MSU/MUW for SBE**

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**From** Andy Chen <chena25@themsms.org>

**Date** Sun 3/2/2025 4:43 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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Hello Dr. Boone,

I hope this email finds you well. My name is Andy Chen, and I am a current senior at The Mississippi School for Mathematics of Science. I would like to offer my opinions on the proposals submitted by Mississippi State University and the Mississippi University for Women regarding the future of MSMS.

To preface, I was born and raised in Olive Branch, MS. I attended DeSoto Central High School before coming to MSMS, and I am the current Senior Class President. I have a younger sibling who plans to attend MSMS the year these proposals are scheduled to take effect. I share my story to say that I understand the values that MSMS holds, and I am personally invested in MSMS's future.

#### The MUW Proposal

The MUW proposal addresses a key concern regarding MSMS's continued operations: a lack of funding. To quote page 11: "MSMS's funding is \$16,000 less per student than the average funding of programs in Arkansas, Louisiana, and Alabama (2 schools)." The most pressing consequence of this lack of funding is MSMS's facilities, particularly residential ones. Frazer and Goen Hall were each built over half a century ago and in spite of recent renovations, are still a major pain point for students. I believe any proposal invested in the future success of MSMS should prioritize allocating the necessary funds towards the construction of new, modern dormitories.

It is on this point, however, where some of my criticism of MUW's proposals lies. MUW is not offering any funding towards the construction of much-needed residential buildings. The proposed academic and honors initiatives are relevant but unable to compensate for the primary needs of MSMS, namely, new housing and academic buildings to support existing and growing classes.

#### The MSU Proposal

The MSU proposal has its merits as well: most notably, the construction of new dormitories. MSU will likely also be able to offer more extracurricular opportunities than MUW will (e.g., research, athletics, etc).

However, I have some serious concerns regarding MSU's proposal. Firstly, the integration of MSMS with Starkville High. The campus proximity, opportunity for interschool courses, and merging of athletics programs all point to a high level of integration of MSMS with Starkville and SOCSO as a whole. The prevailing argument I have heard in support of this movement is that MSMS students will have the chance to experience a more "well-rounded" high school experience. While I agree that this is true, I do

not think it is a merit. I applied to MSMS because I did not want a "traditional" high school experience. I wanted something new. Something different. MSU's proposal fundamentally changes what MSMS is, and I know many of my peers are strongly opposed to these changes.

#### Final Remarks

In their current states, I would lean in favor of the MUW proposal. However, both proposals have room for improvement. Ultimately, what I hope to see is a proposal that shows an understanding of what makes MSMS unique and addresses its biggest problems. MSMS has succeeded thanks to its autonomy, and a good proposal should reflect that. MSMS is in need of new residential and academic spaces, and a good proposal should provide that. MSMS is an "academics-first" school, and a good proposal should preserve that.

Sincerely,

***Andy Chen***

The Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science | Class of 2025  
Senior Class President | MAΘ Tournament Chair

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**MSMS**

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**From** Terry Coffey <coffeycupp@gmail.com>

**Date** Mon 3/3/2025 6:38 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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Dear Dr. Boone,

My husband, David H. Coffey, and I worked as public school teachers in Mississippi for over thirty years. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to express our opinions as local professional educators and community members.

Moving MSMS to Starkville to the new Starkville-Oktibbeha County School District High School area is not a good idea for Mississippi. If you continue to read our email, you will see that we have solid, well-justified reasons to oppose this move.

We are retired professional teachers who have raised three daughters in Columbus and treasured the gem that MSMS is in our community.

We remember when MSMS came into existence here in Columbus and have encouraged many of our high school students to take advantage of the college prep education available to public school students across our state.

MSMS has been an incredible resource for us as Lowndes County teachers.

We have had the opportunity to learn and hone our teaching skills through conferences and personal friendships with the faculty and staff at MSMS.

I took my gifted students on field trips to the W and MSMS.

MSMS welcomed me and my small group of gifted youngsters to visit MSMS on the MUW campus and learn about the educational opportunities available in Columbus.

The MSMS students interacted with my younger students and told my kids about what they were studying and where they came from in Mississippi.

Our first teaching positions were at Motley High School, "west of the river," in 1984 and 1985; later, the name was changed to West Lowndes Elementary, Middle, and High Schools.

We served in many roles during our careers. David went to Jackson and was paid by MDE to collaborate on the curriculum design and testing for Chemistry and Physics.

I was the Gifted Contact Person for the Lowndes County School District for many years. I taught junior English in a regular high school classroom, General and Advanced Biology, and 2nd-12th Gifted. My husband taught AP classes, Trigonometry, Pre-calculus, Algebra I and II, Physics, and Chemistry.

After becoming certified in Gifted Education, I began by looking for gifted kids in the Motley schools (the other schools in the Lowndes County School District, Caledonia and New Hope, had gifted education in place already).

I began my career in gifted education by testing all the students on my campus, including middle and high schoolers and students at elementary schools west of the river, like Plum Grove. I tested 11th graders down to first graders.

I received my master's degree in Gifted Studies in 2005 from MUW.

I have told you about our careers in education in Mississippi so that you can see our **personal and professional testimony to this school's worth to our community.**

Now, I'd like to address the future of MSMS.

- MSMS at the MUW campus needs appropriate funding to maintain and expand the facilities that MUW has provided. The historic buildings were first renovated and prepared for MSMS before 1987.
- 
- Investing in facilities at The W is estimated to cost \$60M instead of the \$85M that MSU proposed, **saving taxpayers money.**
- 
- **All expansion can be done with minimal disruption** to MSMS's operations.
- 
- Investing in The W's existing infrastructure for MSMS is the most **cost-effective and responsible** choice for Mississippi taxpayers.
- 
- MUW has identified two spaces where a new residential facility could be built for MSMS with 400-bed spaces for an estimated \$35M. Additional beds could be added for the needed professional staff.
- 
- The MUW campus provides the perfect climate for academically gifted high schoolers to thrive and has done so for the last 38 years. The W offers **a safe and supportive environment.**
- 
- MSMS students regularly walk to downtown Columbus and are never more than **five minutes by foot** from their classrooms, library, dining hall, health center, recreation center, residences and classes, and the campus police.
- 
- Instead of building new facilities at MSU, the spaces on The W's campus could be renovated for an estimated \$25M **to bring them up to date and add a robotics lab.** These spaces include the Hooper Science Building, Shackelford, and Mary Wilson.

Thank you again for the opportunity to speak our minds to you and all the folks at the Department who work tirelessly to bring quality public education to Mississippi's children and young people.

Ms Terry Ann Gargano Coffey  
3302 5th St. N.  
Columbus, MS 39705

Phone: 662-574-0429  
Email: [coffeycupp@gmail.com](mailto:coffeycupp@gmail.com)

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Terry Gargano Coffey  
Mississippi University for Women  
English '85 & Gifted '05  
GDI #29  
She/Her/Hers



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**MSMS proposal feedback**

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**From** Nora Corrigan <nrcorrigan@gmail.com>

**Date** Mon 3/3/2025 1:25 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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Dear Dr. Boone,

After reviewing the proposals from MUW and MSU for the future of MSMS, I believe MUW's proposal is the stronger of the two, providing much more detailed and substantive information about academics and facilities. I am also concerned about the costs of moving MSMS and building an entirely new facility.

Sincerely,  
Nora Corrigan

**MSMS relocation, please do not.**

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**From** Kagan Coughlin <todayisaworkdayms@gmail.com>  
on behalf of  
Kagan Coughlin <kagan@todayisaworkday.com>  
**Date** Tue 3/4/2025 4:02 PM  
**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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Good afternoon Dr. Boone,

Please do not relocate the Mississippi School of Math and Science to Starkville.

After reading both proposals, I believe there are two realities that we need to consider.

- 1) Our state will be able to afford an enormous investment in MSMS.
- 2) Our state will not be able to afford this significant investment, and MSMS will continue under their limited budget.

In both realities, relocating the operations of MSMS to Starkville would not produce better results for our state, and would negatively impact the students who for decades have found a safe, intense learning environment, free from the social challenges found on other high school campuses.

Written by the father of a Junior young lady at MSMS and a son who is going through admissions now.

Also, someone who has dedicated the past 20 years to improving the educational and economic opportunities in Mississippi.

Best,

-Kagan

Kagan Coughlin

Yalobusha County Economic Development District  
Rural Community Impact Fund, CDE  
Base Camp Coding Academy and Graduate Institute  
Everest, Mississippi's First Rural Education and Innovation Hub

802 Central Street  
Water Valley, MS 38965  
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## Regarding the move of MSMS to MSU

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From Nora Courtney <nora.courtney05@gmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 4:34 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### External Email

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Hello,

My name is Nora Courtney. I graduated from the Mississippi School for Math and Science in 2023, and I am a current sophomore at the University of Mississippi. MSMS fostered my leadership skills, dedication to excellence, and campus involvement. I am a Public Policy Major and active with the Trent Lott Institute, Sally Barksdale Honors College, Greek Life, Student Activities Association, and so much more. After reading both proposals, I believe that if you move MSMS to MSU, you will be killing the school and tarnishing its legacy. MSMS means so much to me. My experiences with my peers, teachers, and my involvement with the Columbus community all played an important role in shaping who I am today and the path I am on. The city of Columbus, as well as MUW, has poured so much love into my alma mater. Moving away from the comfort of my home at the age of 16 was scary, but the city of Columbus welcomed me with open arms and made me feel at home, as well as MUW. If you decide to rip MSMS away from MUW, it would be the ultimate act of betrayal. Through numerous programs at MSMS, like Tales from the Crypt, Eight of May, and so many more, hundreds of local people from Columbus come out and support us. As someone who has participated in these programs, it is impossible to deny how much we mean to them. One of the benefits of being on MUW's campus is how small and intimate the relationship is. It provides a sense of safety to MSMS students and parents. My parents would have never let me attend MSMS if it was on the campus of a much larger University because of the safety risks. I would have missed out on these important and instrumental relationships that I built. I can guarantee you that this is not just a personal case, and if this move would occur, there would not be an increase in enrollment, but a decrease.

During my time at MSMS, I was an active member of the Student Government Association, where we would write and pass bills to express our opinions to MSMS administration on rules and regulations in the handbook and whether we thought they should be changed. During my senior year, we passed a bill related to changing the location of MSMS to MSU. The only reason it passed was because of the state of the facilities we lived in. Our dorms were old and outdated, and we passed this bill not to encourage a move to MSU, but to let administration know that our living spaces needed to be updated. Administration heard us and listened. My little sister is a current senior at MSMS, and since she has been there, the facilities have been updated and are continuing to go through changes. This has all been with the help of MUW. This gets to my main question: Why would you take the money to build an entirely new school to benefit people who are not MSMS students instead of directly benefitting them and supplying funding to help renovate our facilities? According to a quick Google search, Starkville High School last went under renovation in 2023. Do they really need a new facility, let

alone one that their taxpayers don't have to pay for? I do not think that is fair to the rest of Mississippi's taxpayers. Starkville taxpayers should be paying for a new Starkville High School, not taxpayers from Biloxi or Oxford. Looking at the breakdown of costs, what MUW is asking for to renovate MSMS facilities is just a fraction of what MSU and Starkville are asking for. It would be in the better interest of MSMS students, who this move would be effecting mostly, to stay in Columbus and for Starkville residents and students to pay for their own new high school, not all of Mississippi.

I am forever grateful for my memories, experiences, and education from MSMS, and it will always hold a special place in my heart. I am also so incredibly grateful to the state of Mississippi for funding such an important institution with resources I was unable to access at my local public high school. I am begging that you reject MSU's proposal and accept MUW's. From MSU's plan, Starkville High School students will benefit more than MSMS students, which is especially scary to me because this money is supposed to be allocated for MSMS students. By investing in MUW's proposal, you are giving MSMS administration and students more opportunity to shape and build their school for the benefit of MSMS students, not Starkville students. MSMS prides itself on the opportunities it provides to its students, and I am a proud alumna. MSU's proposal doesn't make MSMS students, faculty, alumni, or parents proud. Instead, it makes us feel like we are being used as a tool to benefit someone else.

To close, I am begging that you make the decision that benefits MSMS students. This move to MSU does not benefit them, it is using them as a means for success for a different group of people. Once again, I am so incredibly appreciative for the love and funding the Mississippi Department of Education has not only poured into my school, but directly into me. Please reject MSU's proposal and accept MUW's. Why would money that should be used for MSMS students be used to directly benefit Starkville High Students? I see it as a robbery, as do many of my fellow alumni, and MSMS parents, MSMS faculty, MUW faculty, and the Columbus Community. Please think about what is in the best interest of MSMS students, not Starkville High students.

Sincerely,  
Nora Courtney, a proud MSMS graduate.

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**Re: A parent's thoughts on the potential relocation of MSMS**

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**From** Sean Courtney <[scourtney@gmail.com](mailto:scourtney@gmail.com)>

**Date** Mon 3/3/2025 4:27 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <[secondaryeducation@mdek12.org](mailto:secondaryeducation@mdek12.org)>

 1 attachment (216 KB)

367c0079-c216-4895-ad37-62ae86db35fb.jpg;

**External Email**

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I failed to attach the referenced editorial

On Mon, Mar 3, 2025 at 4:25 PM Sean Courtney <[scourtney@gmail.com](mailto:scourtney@gmail.com)> wrote:

I am sending the following message to the Mississippi Department of Education, (MDE) as they have requested feedback regarding the potential relocation of the Mississippi School of Mathematics and Science (MSMS) from its home in a little, tucked away corner of the campus of the Mississippi University for Women (MUW) in Columbus, Mississippi (where it has been located since its founding in 1987) to the campus of Mississippi State University (MSU) in Starkville, Mississippi...a distance of twenty five miles. If relocated, MSMS will be a "Partnership" school with a new Starkville High School, within the Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District (SOCSD.) MDE requested proposals from both MSU and MUW in response to Representative Roberson's efforts, and luckily, MSU had one ready to go. MUW was able to create and respond with one of their own before the deadline. MDE is now asking for public input, and thus:

I feel like I should add a little background here. First off: my interest in this school is personal. My older daughter graduated from MSMS in 2023 and my younger daughter will do the same in just over two months. I can't sing the school's praises enough. My wife, Rebecca, and I are often asked "how could you send your kids off to school so early?" as MSMS is a dormitory-based school for juniors and seniors in high school. It's also a three and half hour drive from our hometown. Obviously, it was not an easy decision to make, nor has it been an easy thing to do. By sending our children to MSMS, we have missed out on a lot. Think of all of the memories that you cherish from your child's last two years of high school. Friday night lights. Plays. Choir concerts. Homecomings. Proms. Simple weeknight family dinners where everyone talks about their days. We missed out on all of those and so much more. Do we regret it? Not for one second. At MSMS, our girls were able to receive a world-class education taught by nationally-recognized professors. At one point in time, MSMS was ranked as the #6 public high school in the country and is routinely ranked at the top for the state. Both of our daughters increased their ACT scores to a point that in-state college tuition is no longer a worry for them. They were also able to compete for, and receive, competitive scholarships. When my younger daughter and I were touring one in-state college, she asked one of the instructors if she should skip the 100-level sciences if she already has college credit

for them. The instructor's response was: "Only if you went somewhere like MSMS." All of that is to say: Our family loves our local (A-rated) school district very much, and we are also very attached to MSMS.

Secondly: It needs to be noted (again) that MSMS is a public school. Despite many misconceptions, we did not pay for our children to attend MSMS. It is a highly-competitive school that attracts top-performing students from all over the state. The only financial considerations made by the parent are room and board (and waivers are available for families who are unable to pay for it) and normal lab fees. I have been on and around the MSMS campus since 2021 and am the first to agree that the campus needs and deserves a great deal of attention. My younger daughter's dorm received a makeover this year and it looks much better, but the state is not doing right by these children by not updating their living facilities, as well as their learning facilities. The Mississippi Department of Education and our state legislature is responsible for the financial well-being of the school and, if nothing else, I am glad that they are finally admitting that it has been neglected for far too long. MDE is supposed to advocate on behalf of MSMS. However, one does not need to throw the baby out with the bathwater.

Thirdly: I'm just going to call it like I see it: the proposal and effort to move MSMS from Columbus to Starkville is a ruse. This is not being done for the benefit of MSMS students. This is clearly being done for the benefit of the tax payers in Starkville and Oktibbeha County. You can read the attached opinion piece for yourself, but here is the skinny version: School districts typically build new buildings following local bond initiatives, the cost for which is the responsibility of local taxpayers. My county recently passed such an initiative in order to construct a new high school. We will pay for this. This is the way that every public school in the state, except for MSMS and the Mississippi School for the Blind and Deaf, is constructed and paid for. SOCS D has a different idea when it comes to paying for new schools and new construction: let the state pay for it. Let EVERYONE in the state pay for their new school. Let the people of the Gulf Coast pay for it. Let the people of the Delta pay for it. Let the people of Oxford and Hattiesburg pay for it. How can they do this? They can do this under their proposal to "share space" with the new version of MSMS as a "Partnership High School." SOCS D has already been given the green light to borrow up to \$87 million for a new high school, and their plan to let the MSMS kids eat in their cafeteria will make sure that ALL Mississippians get to pay off that note...not to mention the fact that taxpayers across the state would be on the hook for a new MSMS, which is estimated to cost another \$100 million. Doesn't seem fair, does it? I guess it does if you live in Starkville. Why not pay to rehab the existing school and its buildings? As the opinion piece says: "Follow the money" as it flows from all corners of the state, and from all of our wallets, into Starkville, Mississippi.

Lastly: My daughter is an editor for MSMS's student newspaper, THE VISION. She has noted that there has been little attention given to one group of people in this conversation: MSMS students. As a parent of two of those students, I would not send my children to MSMS if it were housed on the MSU campus. It is one thing for my 15-18 year old children to live, eat, exercise, socialize, and learn in a corner of a very small suitcase school like MUW. It is a wholly other thing to even think about sending them to live on a major SEC school campus (I would feel the same way if there was a movement to move the school to Ole Miss, so please don't accuse me of having some anti-State bias.) MUW does not have a football stadium that seats over 60,000 people. ESPN never brings its rolling carnival to Columbus, Mississippi. There are no fraternity houses on MUW's campus. MUW has fewer than 2,500 students and fewer than 500 living on campus. I have asked my daughters if they would have liked the idea of attending MSMS on State's campus. Without delay, they both answered "no." They would have never considered it, and frankly, neither would my wife and I. I also

asked two other recent MSMS graduates, who happen to be a graduate of Mississippi State and a current Mississippi State student. They agreed. they would not have attended MSMS on State's campus. My sample size of four students may be small, but it is solid. Every one of those students opposes the proposed move. It should be noted that every one of them also asked the most obvious question, "Why not just spend money to improve the existing school?" I told you that MSMS is full of smart kids. The numbers that are being tossed around are as follows: MSU/SOCSD wants \$87 million from the state for the new Starkville High School and estimates that it will need another \$100 million or so for the new MSMS. MUW is asking for \$35 million for new dormitory space and \$25 million for upgrades to existing classroom facilities. Mind you, MSMS and MUW have been begging for money from the legislature and MDE every year, and for the most part, those cries have fallen upon deaf ears.

I will close my all-too-long rant by asking obvious questions, and asking that anyone with a passing interest in this answer them for themselves: Who stands to benefit from this? Who stands to lose? Is this beneficial to the state of Mississippi? Did Mississippi State want to house MSMS prior to Starkville needing to build a new high school? Would you want your high school junior living on Mississippi State's (or any other large university) campus? Are you ready to open your wallet so that the students of the Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District can have a state of the art high school while you also continue paying local taxes for the high school in your community?

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sean Courtney,  
Wiggins, Mississippi

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# Opinion

THE  
DISPATCH

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## OUR VIEW

### To see who benefits from an MSMS move,

If the Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District didn't have plans to build a new high school, it's possible the idea of relocating the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science to the MSU campus might never have moved beyond conjecture.

That idea is confirmed by reading MSU's proposal to the Mississippi Department of Education, which asked both MSU and MUW to submit proposals for hosting the state's residential high school for academically advanced students.

The genesis of the idea is thought to have emerged in 2023, when then-MSMS Director Donnie Cook had secretive conversations with MSU and SOCSU Superintendent Tony McGee to discuss the possible move.

But the seed of that idea may have been planted much earlier — in 2016 when the SOCSU and MSU agreed on a plan to build the Partnership School for grades 6 and 7 on

property owned by the university. Through that arrangement, SOCSU was able to move into a \$30-million facility without having to raise taxes, instead extending a bond set to expire to cover its \$16 million share of the cost. The state legislature kicked in \$10 million for the project. MSU donated the land, valued at \$5 million.

Now, SOCSU's board has passed a resolution to borrow as much as \$87 million for a new high school, but surely the idea of asking voters to approve anything close to \$87 million in bonds is a fool's errand. This time around, taxes will have to be raised to pay that debt.

You can see the dilemma. So now it's back to the legislative trough, so SOCSU can seek much more money for a much bigger high school project adjacent to the Partnership School on the MSU campus.

But some have seen even more opportunity: the state could be leaned on for more

money if a joint Starkville High School and MSMS campus was built.

MSMS and MSU are both funded by the legislature, which opens a large new revenue stream for funding a new Starkville High School that is intrinsically connected to both. Suddenly, the cost of building a high school cafeteria disappears by calling it a joint-MSMS cafeteria. It's a pretty nifty sleight of hand.

Estimates for that joint MSMS/SHS campus run anywhere from \$170 million to \$200 million. Since SOCSU is approved to borrow up to \$87 million, that would put the state on the hook for around \$100 million. That's a big ask.

We know of no other Mississippi school district that has succeeded in getting the legislature to fund one new school, let alone two. Every other school district has to rely on local taxpayers to pay for their schools.

In reality, there can be no

### follow the money

new Starkville High School without considerable funding from the state.

We know that by reading the proposal MSU submitted to the Mississippi Department of Education to make its case for becoming the new home of MSMS. It is a plan that relies heavily on the presence of a new Starkville High School. In fact, there is no scenario provided in its proposal that doesn't include the new high school.

Perhaps MSU could make a case for why it would be the best home for MSMS independent of a partnership with the SOCSU. All we know is that it did not. We believe that is intentional.

There is an old saying that goes if you want to know the real motives in politics, follow the money.

Moving MSMS to MSU isn't a decision made with the taxpayer in mind since it is far, far more affordable to build and renovate MSMS facilities

on the MUW campus than it would be to start from scratch at MSU.

Moving MSMS to MSU and Starkville has little impact on either the university or the city. With a maximum of 240 students, MSMS has no impact on a university with 23,000 students while the economic impact of MSMS would scarcely move the needle in Starkville, which reaps enormous economic benefits from those thousands of college students.

The plan to move MSMS is not about the kids, either, who lose the esprit de corps created on a small campus while becoming co-mingled with Starkville High on a large campus. Much of what makes MSMS work so well is lost in the process.

So who benefits the most from MSU's plan?

The answer: SOCSU, which will profit at the expense of MSMS, Columbus and MUW, all of whom deserve to be treated better.

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**Re: Mississippi State Board of Education seeks stakeholder feedback on MSMS proposals**

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**From** Savannah Culver <culversavannah@gmail.com>

**Date** Mon 3/3/2025 8:34 AM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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March 3, 2025

Mississippi Department of Education  
359 North West Street, Post Office Box 771  
Jackson, MS 39205-0771

Re: Mississippi State Board of Education seeks stakeholder feedback on MSMS proposals

Dr. Donna Boone:

My name is Savannah Culver, and I am a proud graduate of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. My time at MSMS from 2013-2015 forever changed me as a person and impacted my future in ways I never predicted. From MSMS, I went on to get a B.S. in Mathematics from the University of Mississippi and ultimately received a M.S. in Higher Education in Student Affairs. I currently work in residential life at an institution of higher education. My switch from STEM to Post Secondary Education was solely based on my experiences at MSMS. While MSMS is inherently a school for STEM education, the MSMS and MUW campus showed me, a first generation student, what college was and how the resources available could let me be successful. Being a residential student allowed me to understand and experience the value of the community and learn from others from across the state of Mississippi.

As an educator myself, I appreciate the State Board of Education and Mississippi Department of Education's initiative and desire to address the MSMS's current challenges to ensure its sustainability for the future; however, the Mississippi State University proposal does not align with the pillars of MSMS and further undermines the purpose of the institution. MSMS is a unique institution and should be treated as such. The most successful way to do this is to allow MSMS to continue to be a stand-alone school district with autonomy to meet the unique needs of its students.

Further, the students admitted to MSMS are performing at a higher caliber than their peers across the state. MSMS was founded to purposely help those students succeed in an environment that supports this unique population while simultaneously preparing them for the variety of college experiences they will encounter post graduation. If these students are not allowed to operate within this specialized environment, then the purpose of the institution is not met. The MSU and SOCSO proposal inherently

seeks to dismantle and undermine this purpose. There are many additional flaws in the MSU and SOCSO plan including the inconsistent transportation options available to students and the lack of specialized support for these students.

The current MSU and SOCSO proposal will forever change the experience of gifted Mississippi students. If this proposal were to have been my experience, I would not be the person I am today. I would not have pursued being an educator in higher education and I would not understand the value of residential living and individualizing experiences for students. I am a strong believer and supporter of MSMS and as a monthly donor to the institution, I put my money where my mouth is. I appreciate the seeking of stakeholder voices and at the end of the day strongly encourage you to fully fund the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. MSMS is a driving force in creating success personally, academically, and economically for each of its alumni and for the state of Mississippi, despite its inadequate funding.

I thank you for your consideration and your care for the future of the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. I hope you hear the impacts of these proposals and continue to support the best option for education in the state of Mississippi.

Thank you,

Savannah Culver, M.S.  
Residence Life Coordinator  
University of Northern Iowa  
[culversavannah@gmail.com](mailto:culversavannah@gmail.com)  
319-420-0759

**Fwd: MSMS**

---

**From** John Davis <johnd39701@gmail.com>

**Date** Mon 3/3/2025 3:31 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

External Email

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>

> Dear Dr. Boone,

>

> Thank you for your efforts with the Mississippi Department of education to address some of the issues at the Mississippi School for Mathematics and Science. It is an admirable endeavor, but one which needs to be taken very cautiously for all stakeholders. I consider the primary stakeholders to be the students of MSMS and all the future young people who might have the opportunity to attend MSMS.

>

> I have been involved with MSMS since its inception. The company for which I worked was the original Partner in Progress through the Chamber of Commerce in Columbus and we helped establish scholarships for students and faculty for summer programs as well as provide fellowship opportunities for students and faculty. It has been a joy for me to work with all of the school directors and faculty for 37 years. I also have had the opportunity to serve on the MSMS Foundation board for 16 years. I'm currently the treasurer of the Foundation. I am not writing as a foundation board member today, however. I am writing as a citizen of Mississippi and as a parent.

> My daughter attended MSMS and received a wonderful education. It was much better than the education she would've received at the school that she was attending. It allowed her to receive an opportunity to go to an Ivy League college, where she was able to study Biochemistry and now works for IBM. The education she received at MSMS was outstanding and the relationships she developed with the faculty in such a one on one environment were superb. Friendships made were, and are, long lasting and through a common bond of living in a substandard dorm, additional friendships and solidarity feelings were formed.

> I am well aware of the facility challenges at MUW. I'm also well aware that I do not think MUW has Exhibited the leadership nor vision it could have with respect to MSMS. However, MSMS and MUW have had a very good relationship and MUW has done the best it could do with its limited resources. As a father, also, MUW was a very fine environment for my daughter. I'm on the MSU campus frequently and would not like my 16-year-old daughter living there. I'm very disappointed in MSU's proposal as it doesn't really incorporate the MSMS students in MSU. It only has them as part of a city high school campus; With a separate dorm. MSMS students and MSMS school is not designed to be an honors wing of a public high school. For my daughter's experience with MSMS and while at MUW, she was able to interact with college professors, walk freely about campus, use and enjoy the same cafeteria and library

as the MUW students. This provided a very Profitable cohesive environment.

>

> What I would like to ask you to do is to ask the legislature to provide appropriate funds to enhance the facilities at MUW where a proven track record is evident. MSMS students need and deserve adequate dormitory and classroom space. This has been lacking for over 20 years. The state of Mississippi has failed its best and brightest students in that regard. But that has not caused the students to fail. Amazingly, they have succeeded beyond wildest expectations.

>

> Thank you for your interest and support and I would be happy to discuss my concerns with you or any of your group at your convenience.

>

> John R Davis

> 662.386.3088

> johnd39701@gmail.com

>

>

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## MSMS moving?

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**From** Dean, Cody <CodyDean@IamMorrison.com>

**Date** Tue 3/4/2025 2:45 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### **External Email**

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My child is currently enrolled at MSMS in the 11<sup>th</sup> grade. So far, his experience has been completely amazing. The classes are small and intimate so the kids get to know one another pretty well. The teachers there are amazing and very attentive to the students as well. I think what helps make MSMS so special is its' teacher to student ratio and small campus. However, it is obvious that they are hurting for money and have been for some time. I hear a lot from my son and some previous students that all of the buildings have heating and cooling problems. Should the dorms be rebuilt? They aren't the nicest in the world but in my opinion, they are just fine.

The largest advantage that MSU has over The W is money. MSMS needs support from you to survive at The W. I am not against MSMS moving to MSU but from the proposal they made my impression is that are going to get carried away and ruin what makes MSMS so special. MSU wants to add a 10<sup>th</sup> grade(kids are too young, not ready), they want to increase the student body (too many students and it becomes just another high school), they want to integrate MSMS with Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District (SOCSD) (most of these kids left their high school because they didn't fit in intellectually and/or mentally, they don't want to be re-integrated back into normal high school life).

I admit that MSU has The W beat when it comes to money, infrastructure, and available technologies but this isn't the right move for MSMS. The W is able to remain hyper-focused on MSMS and our kids while they are living there. I don't get the same warm and fuzzies when I think about MSU. I have nothing against MSU. Both myself and my wife went there, as well as half of my family. We're locals. We see and feel the difference. I lived a few blocks down from The W for 5 years. I know the neighborhood. Many of my coworkers were enrolled at The W in either the nursing or culinary program. There is a wide chasm between MSU and The W when it comes to an intimate and personalized education. The W can provide this level of educational intimacy for our CHILDREN. I know that they can because I witnessed it for years and now I am experiencing it.

Thank you for your time,

Cody Dean  
Director of Food & Nutrition  
Morrison Healthcare  
North Mississippi Medical Center - Eupora, MS  
Office 662-258-9439  
Cell 662-267-8407  
codydean@iammorrison.com

**MSMS Proposal - Logan Dean**

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**From** Logan Dean <deanl26@themsms.org>

**Date** Fri 2/28/2025 3:17 PM

**To** SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

**External Email**

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I feel that the proposal made by MSU takes away what makes MSMS special. MSU proposes to put MSMS classes on the Starkville High School campus. Most students came to MSMS to get away from high school and do bigger things. MSMS encourages the freedoms and responsibilities of being a college student. Going to MSU would take that away with how they want to execute it. I'm not saying I would never want to transfer to the MSU campus. They have better funding, more resources, and more buildings. But, they'd have to offer a better proposal for me to even consider it.

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**MSMS Proposed location**

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**From** Morgan Dean <75modean@gmail.com>

**Date** Thu 2/27/2025 7:27 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.

As a parent of a current MSMS student, I am a proponent of keeping the school at MUW. While it may be attractive because of the proximity of MSU, the proposal to make MSMS a part of the SOCS D detracts from the overall concept of MSMS as a standard for innovative educational experiences at MUW. Currently, my daughter and her classmates have access to MUW and MSU and are able to experience and witness the college first hand. Sharing a campus with Starkville High School, no matter how new, diminishes the independent experience I want for my children.

Also, being connected to SOCS D by definition eliminates the independence MSMS has enjoyed as a residential school on the MUW campus. I urge to to fully support the experience and uniqueness of the students who work so hard to be themselves and who find a true home at MSMS at MUW.

Sincerely,

Morgan Dean, EdS  
6 Third Ave  
Lucedale, MS 39452  
662-719-4136

---

## Please Support Keeping MSMS at home at The W

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From Anghaarad Teague Dees <anghaarad@hotmail.com>

Date Tue 3/4/2025 11:22 AM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

### External Email

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Dr. Boone,

I am writing to voice my support for keeping Mississippi's premier residential high school on the campus of The W. It was faculty from MUW who dreamed up the inception of such a unique opportunity for the best and brightest high school juniors and seniors in Mississippi and The W as well as the city of Columbus have kept up their end of the bargain by supporting this bold venture. I have lived in several states across the south and I can tell you that MSMS is the envy of many of Mississippi's neighbors with its excellent track record of producing National Merit Scholars, Top Faculty, and overall scholastic achievement. The W campus which has also housed Mississippi's Governor's School for 44 years, provides a safe, historic, and supportive environment appropriate for high school students. The hard reality is that MSMS and MUW have not received adequate funding to care for the facilities for quite a long time and the facilities dedicated to MSMS use are in dire need of refurbishment and upgrades...the W has gone above and beyond to keep the buildings and services as top notch as possible despite the funding shortages. It is time for MDE and the State Legislature to step up to the plate and provide the funding needed to make upgrades to the dorms and academic facilities...for a fraction of the cost that has been requested by the MSU proposal, The W would be able to continue to be the perfect home for MSMS.

I will share my personal experience with MSMS...as a student at the W I interacted with MSMS students and faculty regularly as a fellow neighbor on campus, but also as an employee with food services and instructor in the strings program. Beginning my Freshman year, I taught violin to MSMS students as part of the Suzuki string program on campus...these students took these lessons for little to no cost and it was a service gladly provided to these young musicians. I met recently with the current chair of the music department and she shared how the department has greatly expanded the opportunities for MSMS students interested in lessons as well as participating in various musical ensembles. My sister is a professor in the theater department and has provided numerous hours of instruction to students as well as her expertise assisting with their theater productions. As the Director of Catering for The W's food services in the mid-late 1990's, I often catered events for MSMS and it was always a joy to work with the administration as well as student organizations, these events helped me gain insight into the student body and these are truly unique and gifted students who thrive on The W's campus.

I could go on and on sharing all of the many reasons why MSMS should remain at The W, but I am certain that you have received many emails with all of the rationales for supporting The W remaining the home for MSMS and I commend them to you. My final concern is that this move would remove the unique atmosphere that has fostered the success of MSMS, this proposal of a partnership with Starkville Schools is a lousy idea and highly unfair to every other high achieving public school district in the state. I can't even imagine if Oxford or Gautier or Tupelo had made this ask of the state how the residents in

Starkville, Jackson and Vicksburg would feel. If Starkville wants a new high school, they should pay for a new high school...if Starkville and MSU want a partnership then I'm all for it, but not at the expense of MSMS in Columbus and definitely not on the state's dime. I thank you for your time and for listening to the concerns of the constituents of The W, Columbus and MSMS.

In gratitude,

Rev. M. Anghaarad Teague Dees

MUW Class of 1995

Bachelor of Music in Commercial Music & Music Education

Past President of the Mississippi University for Women Alumni Association

2006 MUW Alumni Achievement Award Recipient

Pastor, Head of Staff

Quaker Memorial Presbyterian Church

Lynchburg, Virginia

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## MSMS Public Comment Period

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From Norma Dees <normadees@yahoo.com>

Date Sun 3/2/2025 12:04 PM

To SecondaryEducation <secondaryeducation@mdek12.org>

Cc jcarter@senate.ms.gov <jcarter@senate.ms.gov>; jestrada@house.ms.gov <jestrada@house.ms.gov>

### External Email

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Dr. Boone:

I would like to comment on the MUW/MSU proposals about the Mississippi School of Math and Science.

As an alumna of MUW, I take much pride in the fact that the MSMS has been housed at my alma mater since its inception in 1987. Academic excellence has always been a hallmark of MUW, so it made perfect sense to locate the school there. Another W hallmark is its historic outreach to underserved student populations, including women, minorities, economically disadvantaged and diverse populations of all kinds in our state.

As state support has diminished through the years, another thing the W is known for is creating favorable outcomes for less and less money. In fact, MUW is one of the most cost-effective organizations in Mississippi, and has for years handled the financial and administrative services for MSMS despite the fact that state funding has not kept up with costs. MSMS alumni who remain in Mississippi become teachers, doctors, nurses and business leaders, all of which our state sorely needs. Why wouldn't the state invest taxpayer dollars in enhancing an existing and **SAFE** environment for these outstanding students?

MUW proposes an investment of \$60 million to expand and upgrade MSMS facilities, as opposed to the \$85 million which has been proposed by MSU. Since most of that \$85 million will go to basically upgrading Starkville High School, this means that state funds will be used to upgrade a local school in a local school district. I think I can safely say that most public high schools in Mississippi would love to have an extra \$85 million of state money. If Starkville High needs an upgrade, let the citizens of Starkville pay for it. Clearly, it simply makes more fiscal sense to keep the school at MUW.

MSMS at MUW must be doing something right if MSU and the Starkville Public School District are so anxious to get their hands on it and the taxpayer dollars that support it. I hope that the IHL and the Legislature will do the fiscally responsible thing and leave MSMS where it is, and then properly fund it with the dollars that it needs and deserves. As an MUW alum, but more importantly a Mississippi taxpayer, I cannot support this egregious money grab by MSU. I urge the Legislature to invest in MSMS's future while maintaining its successful partnership with MUW.

Thank you for your attention and consideration.

Norma Barnett Dees

MUW Class of 1978  
Gulfport, MS