

# The STARKVILLE SPARK is GROWING!

As we welcome the opportunities of the  
STARKVILLE OKTIBBEHA SCHOOL DISTRICT

## The spark.

*We are on the verge of something amazing for our community and for our children as our two school districts merge to form the **Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District** in July 2015.*

## WHY CONSOLIDATION?

**Senate Bill 2818** passed by the Mississippi Legislature in April 2014 created the **Starkville Oktibbeha Consolidated School District** and outlined the plan for its required establishment beginning July 1, 2015. We embrace this mandate as the spark for expanding educational opportunities for all children living in Oktibbeha County to new levels of excellence.

## WHAT IS THE COMMISSION?

House Bill 716, the original legislation that consolidated the two districts approved in April 2013, also established the Commission on Starkville Consolidated School District Structure, an advisory group comprised of representatives from Starkville School District, Oktibbeha County School District, Mississippi State University and the Mississippi Department of Education. The Commission, the first of its kind in the state, was charged with making recommendations to the legislature to "improve the quality of education and the efficiency at which it is delivered."

For seven months between July 2013 and January 2014, the Commission held public hearings and numerous public meetings to explore many scenarios for how the new district should be structured. In its report to the Mississippi Legislature, the Commission presented a unique plan for consolidation.

## LEADERSHIP IN THE NEW DISTRICT

Through Senate Bill 2818, the current superintendent of the Starkville School District (Dr. Lewis Holloway) will become the superintendent of the consolidated district. In addition the Board of Trustees of the consolidated district will consist of the existing members of the current SSD Board as of July 1, 2015. Upon the first occurrence of a vacancy on the board of the consolidated district due to an expired term of an appointed board member, the vacancy will become an elected position and must be an individual who lives outside the City of Starkville. The first election of a new board member representing those who reside in the county will be held in November 2016. Thereafter, three members will be appointed by the Starkville Board of Alderman and two will be elected, one from the former Oktibbeha County School District and one from the added territory that lies outside the city limits in the former Starkville School District.

## The plan.

### PARTNERSHIPS WITH MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY

Senate Bill 2818 authorized and encouraged the new Starkville Oktibbeha School District to develop a partnership with Mississippi State University to create a model rural education school to serve all sixth and seventh grade students from Oktibbeha County and a model prekindergarten program which shall also serve as a model for the education of teachers and administrators.

The Starkville Oktibbeha School District and Mississippi State University plan to construct a **new partnership school for grades 6-7** located on the MSU campus. The new school will include facilities and resources to be used by MSU in preparing students, teachers, and administrators to become change agents in education throughout the state. This partnership school will allow our students to learn in the future's most innovative classrooms and be among the first in Mississippi to experience new and developing best practices in education.

This groundbreaking partnership between the new district and the state's largest university promises to set a new standard for educating Mississippi students and future teachers.

## WHERE STUDENTS WILL ATTEND SCHOOL

### High School

Starkville High School welcomed almost 100 students from East and West High Schools to campus for first block classes this school year to take advantage of SHS's wide range of course offerings. We look forward to having all 9-12 graders in Oktibbeha County together at SHS beginning in August 2015.

### Middle School (Grades 7-8)

All 7-8 graders in Oktibbeha County will attend Armstrong Middle School beginning in 2015.

### Sixth Grade

Sixth grade students in the current Starkville School District and sixth grade students at East and West Oktibbeha Elementary Schools will remain at their current schools in 2015.

After considering the significant costs associated with renovating Overstreet Elementary School for sixth grade along with moving SSD's Alternative School and Family Centered Programs to another building, SSD's administrative team determined a more fiscally responsible decision would be to allow sixth grade students to continue to attend their current schools while SSD continues to work with MSU on a groundbreaking partnership that includes the planned construction of a new 6-7 school to be completed within the next few years.

East and West Elementary Schools are currently K-6 schools while AMS is currently 6-8.

Additional teachers will be hired for the new district in grades 7-12 to maintain small class sizes and current teacher/student ratio.

### Elementary

Students who attend East and West Elementary Schools, Sudduth Elementary School, and Henderson Ward Stewart Elementary School will continue to attend their current schools.

## PLAN FOR THE FUTURE

### Middle and High School

All 6th - 7th-grade students living in Starkville/Oktibbeha County will attend the new SOCS/MSU 6-7 Partnership School to be constructed on the MSU campus.

All 8th - 9th grade students living in Starkville/Oktibbeha County will attend Armstrong Middle School (with necessary upgrades and renovations).

All 10th - 12th grade students living in Starkville/Oktibbeha County will attend Starkville High School (with necessary upgrades and renovations).

## LOCAL FUNDING AUTHORIZED IN SENATE BILL 2818 FOR THE NEW DISTRICT

- Oktibbeha County Board of Supervisors shall be the responsible for providing an office, furnishing and utilities for the administrative Office of the Superintendent of the Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District.
- OCS/MSU Conservator shall issue negotiable bonds of the Oktibbeha County School District for the purpose of purchasing school buses, textbooks, computers and software and other equipment and fixtures for school facilities, and making repairs, alterations and additions and utility upgrades, and for any purposes allowed to school facilities in the Oktibbeha County School District and in the Starkville School District to accommodate students in the former Oktibbeha County School District who will be attending school in the new Starkville-Oktibbeha Consolidated School District.
- OCS/MSU Conservator shall initiate the issuance of notes or certificates of indebtedness of the Oktibbeha County School District for the purpose of purchasing school buses, textbooks, computers and software and other equipment and fixtures for school facilities, and making repairs, alterations, utility upgrades and additions to two (2) elementary school buildings located in the Oktibbeha County School District in order to meet the same physical and educational standards as the elementary school buildings in Starkville, and to contribute funds to the Starkville School District for capital improvements to accommodate county school district students and increase capacity for the consolidation.
- OCS/MSU is authorized to contribute funds to the Starkville School District for necessary renovations to current SSD buildings to accommodate incoming students.

## Only the beginning.

*It begins with a spark. The Starkville Oktibbeha School District is poised to take an unprecedented step forward in education, setting a groundbreaking example for how the consolidation process in Mississippi can be more than downsizing paperwork and meeting minimum test-score requirement. It can be the spark for providing greater educational opportunities than ever before and achieving a new and greater shared benchmark of excellence.*

*The Starkville Spark is growing. It is getting brighter and brighter as we welcome new students, new partnerships and new opportunities. A new flame of success for our community has been ignited, and our work is just beginning. Yet, our commitment to every student in Starkville and Oktibbeha County, every day remains the same...*

**Find the spark. And fuel it.**

**STARKVILLE**  
SCHOOL DISTRICT