

# Scott Center students relocate schools

By Molly Archer  
editor-in-chief

Students from the Scott Center have been relocated to their age-appropriate schools this school year due to requirements under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) that provides students who are diagnosed with a disability to spend a certain amount of time around their non-disabled peers in school.

"We were audited by the Mississippi Department of Education last year at the beginning of the school year," Special Education Director Annette Varner said. "The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) governs everything we do. That legislation is what we follow, and so the concept of having children separated based on a disability is not in alignment with that."

According to School Board President Gray Edmondson, the students diagnosed with disabilities were not receiving the same opportunities to join in on as many school activities as their non-disabled peers.

"It goes back to the IDEA Act that requires the school district, at some level, for those students to spend as much time as possible interacting with their non-disabled peers, so P.E., lunch, art, things like that they can participate in," Edmondson said.

"Our district has been doing that, but they've been having to

bus them back and forth from the Scott Center, which means a lot of their day is bussing back and forth. So housing them permanently in those buildings can increase the amount of time that they're able to be there," she said.

"I think they will be greatly enriched to be able to be in the school environment with all of the activities that are available in day-to-day school life and with their peers."

**Annette Varner**  
Special Education Director

because they have nurses on staff and other people who can attend to their needs that are more complicated than the other students," Edmondson said.

According to Varner, several Scott Center parents she spoke with were thrilled about their kids being moved to the appropriate school.

"I think they will be greatly enriched to be able to be in the school environment with all of the activities that are available in day to day school life and with their

While most of the students have already moved to their designated schools, the students that will not be able to transfer schools will continue to attend classes at the Scott Center.

"Students who are severely medically disabled who, right now, would be difficult to move are going to stay where they are

peers," Varner said. "Separating or placing children in a different place just because they have a disability seems like an idea from a different time."

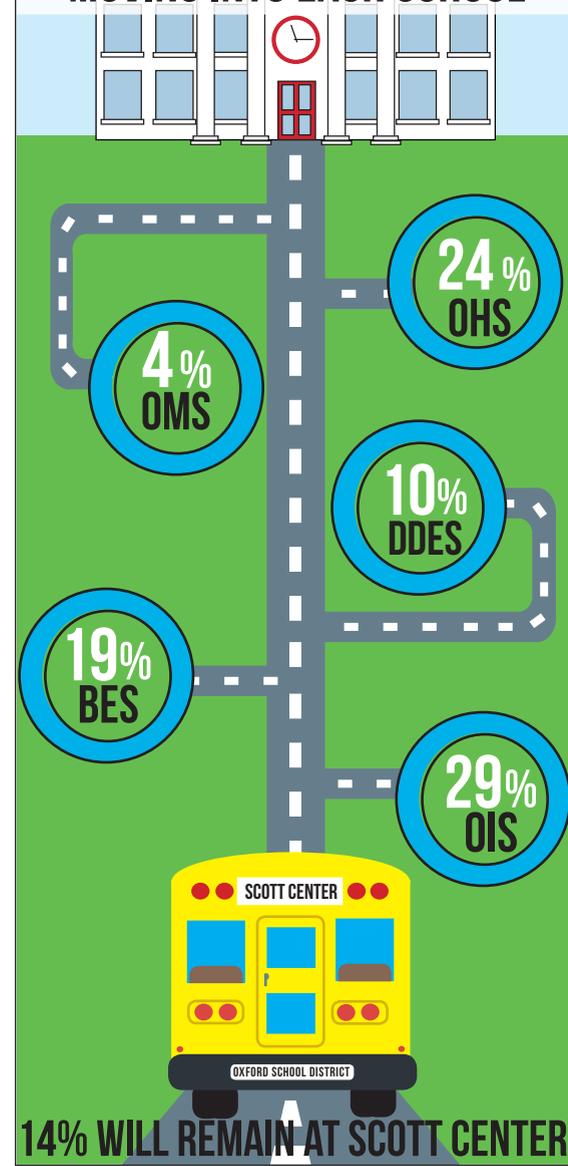
Christy Williams, the 2016-2017 Scott Center Parent of the Year, also believes that moving students from the Scott Center to their age-appropriate school buildings will be a positive change for them.

"I think it's going to be great for typical children and our children from the Scott Center," Williams said. "It is a great opportunity for our children to be around typical kids that talk [and] walk. At the Scott Center, yes, they are around other children who talk and walk, but not every single day and not as much as typical kids do."

Williams' daughter, Tori, has attended the Scott Center since she was 3, and she is currently attending sixth grade at Oxford Intermediate School.

"Her teacher actually sent me a video of three little girls playing basketball with [Tori] in P.E., and as a momma with a special needs kid, that is very heartwarming to me because we didn't know how the other typical children would react to our kids," Williams said. "They have stepped up and gone above and beyond to make Tori and all of the other children in Tori's class feel welcomed and just be friends with them. I mean, it's just been awesome."

## PERCENTAGE OF RETURNING SCOTT CENTER STUDENTS MOVING INTO EACH SCHOOL



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