



MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

WHEREAS, all four public school districts in Pulaski County face common challenges, and it is recognized that all four districts have common assets that can be leveraged to overcome these challenges;

WHEREAS, a growing urban core requires excellent public education delivery;

WHEREAS, students need to be provided with awareness and opportunities for both career and college;

WHEREAS, students need to feel empowered and equipped to make decisions about their futures and their families;

WHEREAS, collaboration will create an economy of scale that each of the districts may enjoy;

WHEREAS, working together will allow for faster and more uniform implementation;

WHEREAS, cooperation among diverse team members from across the four districts will encourage innovation and provide for mutual support;

WHEREAS, a county-wide approach broadens the access and equity of business engagement within each district;

WHEREAS, Pulaski County is a community with high student mobility; and common, standardized experiences will benefit student and family experience from one school to the next;

WHEREAS, the school districts within Pulaski County draw strength not from competition, but from collaboration and common purpose to strengthen all programs for student success;

WHEREAS, leadership from the four districts has studied the results achieved by the Ford NGL model across the country and have found them to be transformational, particularly in urban communities, through the implementation of small learning communities, relevant instruction, and professional learning communities for teachers;

WHEREAS, the Phase I assessment, conducted by consultants from Ford NGL, indicated that Pulaski County and the four public school districts are well positioned for transformation;

WHEREAS, construction of several new facilities is planned for the next 18 months, providing opportunities for expedited implementation;

WHEREAS, under the Ford NGL model, individual districts will retain their autonomy and boundaries;

WHEREAS, academy selection for the four districts should be done at one time for all schools, informed by industry demand and with a bias towards equity of opportunity and access for all students;

WHEREAS, all four districts have invested in existing career and technical education programs that are benefiting a limited number of students and are interested in scaling those efforts; and

WHEREAS, leadership in all four districts share a common vision and sense of opportunity for high school transformation through a career-themed academy model.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual agreements contained herein, we, Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, Little Rock School District, North Little Rock School District and Pulaski County Special School District, do hereby agree to the following:

1. To work together toward the following common purposes:
 - a. That all four districts experience improved enrollment and academic performance.
 - b. That every student graduates from high school with college credit, industry recognized learning and stronger core academic achievement.
 - c. That students gain awareness, exposure and access to high-wage, high-demand career pathways within Metro Little Rock.
 - d. That deeper and more meaningful engagement opportunities are created for business through streamlined and coordinated academy matching processes.
 - e. That equity of access to improved learning exists for all high school students in all districts.
 - f. That a strong, mutually-reinforcing academy brand is created and maintained across all four districts.
 - g. That all students will have equitable access to career themes regardless of residency within the county.
 - h. That teachers will feel empowered and have a sense of ownership over this new model;
 - i. That existing career and technical education programming will be leveraged and scaled to align with the new academy focus within each school.

2. To abide by the following common principles:
 - a. Inclusive process of stakeholder engagement (including teachers, parents, students, etc.) to leverage the strength and individuality of each district and the communities in which they reside.
 - b. Increased and intentional communication across the districts.
 - c. Coordinated and aligned planning, scheduling, and teacher professional development.
 - d. A belief that the success of one district is not at the expense of another, we all win together.
 - e. Realized cost savings where possible through the joint purchasing of curriculum, training, equipment, etc.
 - f. Standardized academy structure, including freshman academy, staffing, and student experiences.
 - g. Integrated common academy sub-brand into each existing high school brand.
 - h. Equitable access for all students across all four districts.

3. To move forward in good faith to achieve the following objectives:
- a. Pursue Phases II through V of the Ford NGL roadmap.
 - b. Form a representative academy leadership council to facilitate the planning and implementation of the academies.
 - c. Create a broader community compact with teachers, business leaders, elected officials, faith-based leaders, chambers of commerce, and non-profits as part of master planning.
 - d. Develop and track a set of common performance metrics.
 - e. Work in good faith with leadership across districts including role-alike meetings.
 - f. Fully staff high schools and district administration at the levels required for full implementation of the academy model.
 - g. Redirect funding to align with priorities and staffing required for implementation.
 - h. Work to sustainably fund, through business partnerships or otherwise, academy infrastructure.
 - i. Coordinate communications around academy transformation.
 - j. Create a trusted, impartial, and data-driven process for the selection of career academies in which each school has the opportunity to express preference for academy placement at their school.

We, the undersigned, do hereby declare we are committed to transforming our public high schools through the Ford NGL model and do hereby agree on the common purposes, principles and objectives stated herein.

Dr. Bryan Duffie, *Superintendent*
Jacksonville North Pulaski School District

Mr. Mike Poore, *Superintendent*
Little Rock School District

Mr. Bobby Acklin, *Superintendent*
North Little Rock School District

Dr. Charles McNulty, *Superintendent*
Pulaski County Special School District