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**Little Rock Regional Chamber, four Pulaski County public school districts participate in Ford Next Generation Learning exploratory study**

**LITTLE ROCK, Ark.** (Jan. 11, 2019) – Little Rock Regional Chamber, in partnership with the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District, Little Rock School District, North Little Rock School District and the Pulaski County Special School District, will launch an exploratory study into Ford Next Generation Learning (NGL), the education initiative of the Ford Motor Company Fund.

The exploratory study will include an initial financial investment by the local business community, through the Little Rock Regional Chamber, which will collectively benefit all four Pulaski County public school districts. The NGL model is nationally recognized for its unique approach to learning and is transforming public high schools to better prepare students for college and professional success in today’s competitive, global economy.

“We have taken the last several months to review the NGL model in partnership with school district leadership. One thing that stood out about Ford NGL is its inclusivity that can be adapted to fit the unique needs of each district and school,” said Jay Chesshir, president and CEO of Little Rock Regional Chamber. “Education is truly one of the most powerful instruments for reducing poverty and inequality and it sets the foundation for sustained economic growth. The Little Rock Regional Chamber is committed to improved student outcomes, higher graduation rates and better preparing young people for success in careers and college.”

The study will evaluate what each district currently has in place to bring a career-focus to student achievement at the high school level. Additionally, it will provide critical information to help district leadership and senior chamber officials decide if full implementation of the five phases is necessary.

“The Jacksonville North Pulaski School District looks forward to the partnership with the Little Rock Regional Chamber and all the school districts in Pulaski County, as we move forward to strengthen our career and technical educational programs,” said Dr. Bryan Duffie, superintendent of the Jacksonville North Pulaski School District.

Through this initial phase, chamber officials and school district leaders will work side-by-side with the Ford NGL team of experts who will visit each participating high school beginning this month.

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“This is a perfect example of schools and community working collaboratively to ensure student success. I am especially grateful that the Chamber has actively worked to engage all of districts in Pulaski County,” said Little Rock School District Superintendent Mike Poore. “The Little Rock School District is appreciative of the efforts that are taking place through this partnership and excited about the next steps in moving the initiative forward to create real, relevant learning opportunities.”

"I personally thank the Little Rock Regional Chamber for taking a vested interest in the direction of our schools. I, along with our district leadership, teachers, and staff, look forward to seeing the results of the exploratory study," said Bobby Acklin, superintendent of the North Little Rock School District.

NGL represents an inclusive, comprehensive community initiative that brings together educators, employers, and community leaders to implement a proven model for transforming secondary schools, which ultimately improves the regional workforce development system.

"The Pulaski County Special School District is thrilled to be working alongside the other school districts in Pulaski County to begin this exploratory study. We're excited to see how Ford NGL can help all of us showcase our strengths and improve upon weaknesses for the betterment of our community," says Dr. Charles McNulty, superintendent of PCSSD.

To learn more about this initiative, visit [www.littlerockchamber.com/ngl](http://www.littlerockchamber.com/ngl).

### **About Little Rock Regional Chamber**

The Little Rock Regional Chamber is the principal business-driven leadership organization responsible for fostering the economic growth and development of the Little Rock region to ensure that business and industry may operate profitably and enhance the earning opportunities and quality of life for every citizen. To learn more, visit [LittleRockChamber.com](http://LittleRockChamber.com) or find the Chamber on social media @LRChamber (Facebook and Twitter) or @LittleRockChamber (Instagram).

### **About Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL)**

Ford Next Generation Learning (Ford NGL) applies a collaborative, community driven approach to transform the high school experience. Created and managed by Ford Motor Company Fund, Ford NGL promotes and supports a career academy model that uses Community-connected Learning (Ford NGL CCL) experiences to engage students with the real-world problems and challenges faced by local employer partners. Ford NGL member communities form a network dedicated to preparing students for college, career, lifelong learning, and leadership. Communities share best practices and experiences and support each other in a united effort to continuously improve, increase student achievement, foster workforce and economic development, and make a positive impact on community prosperity. To learn more about Ford NGL, becoming a Ford NGL Community, or the new Powerful Partnership Series, please visit [www.fordngl.com](http://www.fordngl.com) or [Info@FordNGL.com](mailto:Info@FordNGL.com).

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