

NEWS RELEASE

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CITY, STATE ELECTED OFFICIALS CALL FOR LITTLE ROCK WEST HIGH SCHOOL IN 2019

(Little Rock) – Representative Andy Davis (R, District 31), Representative Jim Sorvillo (R, District 32), and Little Rock City Director Lance Hines (Ward 5) today called on Little Rock School District Superintendent Michael Poore and Arkansas Department of Education Commissioner Johnny Key to continue Pinnacle View Middle School's one grade a year expansion into a Little Rock West High School ninth grade for 2019.

In 2015, West Little Rock parents, grandparents and taxpayers initiated and successfully advocated for the below market purchase and conversion of the former Leisure Arts headquarters (5701 Ranch Drive) into what is now Pinnacle View Middle School. With no attendance zone and utilizing Roberts, Fulbright and Terry Elementary Schools as feeders, the school opened as the district's most demographically diverse. In its third year, it is now the district's largest and highest performing middle school.

Three years after their middle school campaign, parents, grandparents and taxpayers are insisting that their district retain their rising students and families by offering a traditional high school ninth grade in the vacant, three-story, 70,000 square foot office building neighboring the middle school.

In 2016, the building on Pinnacle View's 22-acre campus housed the school's first sixth grade while the warehouse was being converted. It's adjacent to over forty acres the district purchased in 2013, purportedly to build a middle school from the ground up, contingent upon a millage increase.

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Roberts, one of Pinnacle View's feeder schools, is not only the district's largest elementary, it is also its highest performing school, ranking eighth among the 1,034 graded schools in the state

"West Little Rock is the only growing area of the Little Rock School District," said City Director Lance Hines. "Three of our ZIP Codes account for nearly a quarter of the entire county's property tax revenue. And yet, for decades, this part of the district has been chronically underserved by the school district our taxpayers support.

Roberts, which was promised to voters as a Pre-K-8 in the district's 2000 millage increase election, did not open until ten years later, and by that time, it had been downgraded to a Pre-K-5. It was the first LRSD school built west of I-430 since Fulbright in Pleasant Valley in 1978.

Roberts became so in demand that the district eliminated the new school's Pre-K two years after opening in order to free seats for K-5.

"With Roberts in 2010 and Pinnacle View in 2016, West Little Rock students and families have proven that if the district will build it they will come," said Jim Sorvillo, whose district encompasses Roberts. "All we are insisting is that the district not lose these student and families to private schools, charters or other districts by refusing to meet longstanding, overwhelming demand."

Representative Andy Davis, whose district includes schools in the Pulaski County Special, Benton and Bryant school districts said "continuing to add grades at Pinnacle View can offer a bridge to future collaboration with PCSSD's Robinson High School, which is only two miles away. It's past time for our institutions to prioritize the best interests of students over the self interests of adults."

