



For Immediate Release

December 9, 2025

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Board of Education Approves New Name and Mascot for the Future Consolidated Elementary School: Robert Ontiveros Elementary School – Home of the Owls

Moline, IL — The Moline-Coal Valley School District Board of Education has officially approved the name **Robert Ontiveros Elementary School** and selected the **Owls** as the school's mascot for the future consolidated Lincoln-Irving and Willard Elementary campus scheduled to open in Fall 2027.

This milestone follows more than a year of planning, engagement, and community input through the district's collaborative naming initiative, N.E.S.T. (Naming the Elementary School Together). The N.E.S.T. Committee included parents, teachers, support staff, school administrators, district leaders, and Board of Education representatives. The process included student focus groups, community forums, staff feedback, and districtwide surveys that generated thousands of responses reflecting the community's voice. The committee conducted a thorough review of all input collected, grounded in Board Policy 4:150 and eligibility criteria set forth by the Board of Education.

Robert "Bob" Ontiveros was a pioneering entrepreneur, philanthropist, and community leader whose work expanded opportunity and strengthened the cultural and economic vitality of the Quad Cities. Born and raised in Moline's Floreciente neighborhood, Ontiveros founded Group O, now one of the largest Hispanic-owned businesses in the United States. He also played an instrumental role in establishing the Greater Quad Cities Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Mercado on Fifth, and numerous youth, workforce, and community investment initiatives. Naming the school in his honor recognizes his lifelong commitment to expanding opportunity, uplifting families, and ensuring that education and enterprise serve as pathways to a better future.

The newly adopted **Owls** mascot emerged as the top community preference, receiving the highest number of responses among all proposed mascot options. Owls symbolize wisdom, curiosity, critical thinking, and the courage to explore new ideas—traits that align with the district's Portrait of a Graduate and with the inspiring legacy and forward-looking spirit of the new school community. The Owl also aligns well with the physical design. At the heart of

the new school will stand a vibrant tree — a symbol of growth, learning, and connection. The owl is intentionally paired with this tree, symbolizing wisdom perched on a foundation of strength and belonging. Just as an owl observes, learns, and takes flight from a safe nesting place, our students will begin their learning journey rooted in community, supported by teachers, families, and each other, before soaring confidently into their future.

“We are proud of how our community came together to shape this important decision,” said Superintendent Dr. Rachel Savage. Naming the school after Robert Ontiveros is both a celebration of his legacy and a commitment to our students. His life reminds us that brilliance exists in every neighborhood, in every family, and in every child and that opportunity can change everything. From his beginnings in the Floreciente neighborhood to his national impact, Mr. Ontiveros modeled perseverance, leadership, and service. As Robert Ontiveros Elementary School takes shape, we honor his belief that every child deserves access, support, and the chance to rise — and we will work every day to make that belief a reality.”

“On behalf of the Ontiveros family, we want to express our sincere gratitude for this special recognition. My father’s life was rooted in giving back, supporting others, and believing in the potential of every young person. He was proud to call Moline home and having his name live on through a school that will shape future leaders is an honor beyond measure. We are grateful to Moline-Coal Valley School District for ensuring his legacy continues in a way that inspires generations to come,” said Chris Ontiveros, son of Robert Ontiveros.

With the name and mascot officially adopted, the district will begin the next phase of design, branding, and transition work, including the development of the school logo, signage and spirit wear, as we prepare to welcome the future Ontiveros Owls in Fall 2027.

Updates and project information will continue to be shared with families and community members throughout construction and transition planning. Visit www.molineschools.org and view “Latest News” for more information on the Lincoln-Irving Expansion Project.

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