

Agenda Item:	III A: Information/Discussion Item
Date:	July 11, 2024
To:	Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation dba Magnolia Public Schools (“MPS”) Board of Directors (the “Board”)
From:	Alfredo Rubalcava, CEO & Superintendent
Staff Lead(s):	Erdinc Acar, Deputy Superintendent Ali Kaplan, Principal at Magnolia Science Academy-5
RE:	2024 MPS Non-Programmatic Excursion to Costa Rica

### **Action Proposed:**

No action. This is to update the Board regarding the exciting educational opportunity update for 11th-grade students — a trip to Costa Rica which took place from June 18-27, 2024. This non-programmatic excursion offered students a unique blend of experiential learning, cultural exchange, and volunteer service.

### **Purpose:**

MPS aims to cultivate Global Citizens as part of its Graduate Profile. The very first Costa Rica trip allows students to Engage with Costa Rica’s natural and socio-economic landscapes to deepen students' comprehension of biodiversity, sustainability, and global interconnectivity.

### **Background:**

January 11: The leadership team discussed the trip idea at the principal’s meeting  
 January/ February 2024: School teams feedback collection on Jamboard  
 Feb 16/ May 13: School Leadership Calls on Costa Rica Trip  
 April 11: Costa Rica Trip Opportunity Item at the MPS Educational Partners & Development Committee  
 May 9: Approval of MPS Summer Costa Rica Trip at the Board Meeting  
 May 22: Interest survey to students, parents, and staff are sent  
 May 23: Approval of Board Resolution.  
 May 24: Run two information sessions for students and families at 8:45 am at MSA-2 and a Zoom call at 5:00 pm  
 May 31: Student non-refundable deposit of \$200 due towards the total cost of \$1,800. Staff applications due.  
 June 3-5: Selection of staff and processing of scholarship applications.  
 June 7: Costa Rica trip staff coordination meeting.  
 June 14: Costa Rica Trip Recap with the Steering Committee, students and parents  
 June 18-27: The trip to Costa Rica was attended by 26 11th-grade MPS students, 4 MPS staff members, and 1 board member.

### **Analysis:**

As part of MPS's commitment to cultivating Global Citizens, 26 11th-grade students, 4 staff members, and 1 board member embarked on an enriching trip to Costa Rica from June 18-27, 2024. This trip offered a unique blend of experiential learning, cultural exchange, and volunteer service. Students engaged with Costa Rica's diverse ecosystems and socio-economic landscapes, enhancing their understanding of biodiversity, sustainability, and global interconnectivity. Participants immersed themselves in local culture through nature, community service, art and history, dance workshops, and language learning.

**Impact:**

The trip to Costa Rica with 26 juniors had a profound impact on the students, enhancing their global awareness through firsthand experiences with diverse ecosystems and socio-economic environments, thereby deepening their understanding of biodiversity, sustainability, and interconnectedness. Immersion in the history of Costa Rica during the National History Museum trip in San Jose and La Paz Waterfall Gardens Nature Park, along with language learning, broadened their cultural perspectives and appreciation for Costa Rican heritage. Participation in community service activities, such as environmental conservation and supporting local underdeveloped communities by distributing care packages, cleaning up and painting Las Fraijanes Elementary School, and beach clean-up at Verdi Azul, improved their leadership skills, empathy, and social responsibility, which also helped strengthen their college applications. Educational visits to sites like Tamarindo Mangrove & Estuary Boat Tour, Wild Cat Refuge, Rainforest Cocoa Farm for chocolate making, La Fortuna Waterfall, and Arenal Volcano provided practical applications of classroom learning in geography, earth science, and biology. Moreover, students learned about the education system of Costa Rica and attended a presentation at Latin America University of Science and Technology (ULACIT), then toured the campus. The structured yet diverse schedule, including yoga, karaoke night, salsa classes, folkloric dance, city tours, and community projects, fostered personal growth, resilience, and adaptability, while encouraging teamwork and strengthening the sense of community among students and staff. Overall, the Costa Rica trip enriched their educational journey, equipping them with valuable life skills and a deeper commitment to global citizenship.

***Video:***

Link to View Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oiziAKAbjgw>

