



Agenda Item:	II G: Action Item
Date:	May 23, 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, Chief Academic Officer
RE:	Approval of Resolution Authorizing a Non-Programmatic Summer Trip to Costa Rica

Action Proposed:

The administration recommends that the Board approve the resolution to authorize and facilitate a non-programmatic summer trip to Costa Rica for up to sixty high school students.

Purpose:

The Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation (MERF), a non-profit public benefit corporation operating several public charter schools under the name Magnolia Public Schools (MPS), seeks to provide a nonprogrammatic summer trip opportunity to Costa Rica for up to sixty high school students. This trip, scheduled to take place after the conclusion of the 2023-24 instructional year, aims to offer unique educational experiences outside the regular school-year curriculum.

The MERF staff has determined that facilitating this trip aligns with MERF’s charitable purposes. The trip will not be considered an educational activity under Education Code section 49011 and will not offer course credit. Students will cover the trip costs, approximately equivalent to MERF’s per-participant expense, including transportation, lodging, and activities.

This excursion to Costa Rica is an unparalleled opportunity for our students to experience experiential learning, community service, and cultural exchange, aligning with MPS objectives. By participating, students will develop critical skills like global citizenship and cultural awareness, preparing them for a successful future in a globalized world.

- **Experiential Learning:** Interaction with Costa Rica’s natural and socio-economic environments to enhance students’ understanding of biodiversity, sustainability, and global interconnectivity.
- **Community Service:** Hands-on volunteer work in the local community to develop participants’ leadership, empathy, and social responsibility.
- **Cultural Exchange:** Engage with Costa Rican culture through traditional cooking classes, dance workshops, and language immersion, broadening participants’ perspectives.

Background:

The trip is open to high school students, with a cap of 60 students and 10 staff members. MPS staff will support the organization and supervision of the trip, which includes transportation, accommodations, meals, and activities at an approximate cost of \$1,800 per participant. Two groups will be formed, with one departing on the 17th and the other on the 18th, both returning on the 27th. Efforts are underway to support trip costs through fundraising and scholarships. Additionally, pre-trip orientation sessions for students, parents, and staff will be conducted to cover logistics.

Special considerations for the trip include ensuring compliance with both US and Costa Rican laws, obtaining parental consent forms, and establishing protocols for emergencies abroad. Comprehensive travel and health insurance will be secured, and collaboration with a travel agency will be undertaken to facilitate the trip. Additionally, pre-trip orientations will be conducted to cover safety, behavioral expectations, and cultural norms in Costa Rica.

Budget Implications:

Financial support from MERF's general fund may be provided to reduce costs for participants, with the total trip budget not to exceed \$110,000, and up to \$50,000 allocated to support participant costs through philanthropic support using other local revenues from the Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation budget.

Exhibits:

- Resolution authorizing nonprogrammatic summer trip

MAGNOLIA EDUCATIONAL & RESEARCH FOUNDATION

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING NONPROGRAMMATIC SUMMER TRIP

WHEREAS, Magnolia Educational & Research Foundation (“MERF”) is a non-profit public benefit corporation operating several public charter schools in Southern California under the name “Magnolia Public Schools” (“Magnolia”);

WHEREAS, MERF’s charitable purposes include educational and scientific purposes such as providing community support for educational endeavors;

WHEREAS, the MERF Board of Directors (“Board”) desires to provide educational and related opportunities for its Magnolia students both during the school year as part of its academic programming, in addition to facilitating nonprogrammatic opportunities outside of the school year;

WHEREAS, an opportunity as arisen for a nonprogrammatic student summer trip to Costa Rica, outside of the regular school year, that would provide unique and valuable content for those Magnolia students who choose to attend;

WHEREAS, the Board finds it in the interest of MERF and consistent with its charitable purposes to organize and facilitate the trip as a charitable endeavor related to support of Magnolia’s high schools students;

WHEREAS, the Board does not consider the proposed trip to be a school “educational activity” as contemplated by Education Code section 49011, because it is not part of any curriculum nor does it take place during the school year;

WHEREAS, MERF will not offer or provide any course credit or other recognition to participants in the trip;

WHEREAS, the Board desires to provide the summer trip opportunity for up to sixty (60) Magnolia students after completing their eleventh-grade year, selected on a first come first served basis. If on the initial sign-up day more students apply that spaces are available, the MERF will conduct a random lottery;

WHEREAS, the Board intends that each student participant will pay a trip cost roughly equivalent to MERF’s per-participant cost, including transportation, lodging, activities, etc.; and,

WHEREAS, the Board determines that it is in the interest of MERF and consistent with its charitable purposes to provide financial support to some or all the participants for the trip, in an amount to be determined by the CEO, and hereby allocates funding for that purpose, as follows.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the MERF Board of Directors that:

1. The Board approves the summer trip, to occur after the conclusion of the 2023-24 instructional year, with a total trip budget not to exceed \$110,000, the majority of which, if not the entirely, is to be paid by participants.
2. The Board authorizes the CEO and/or his designees to take all steps necessary and desirable to effectuate the summer trip, including signing up participants, advancing funds to plan for and obtain tickets, making reservations, etc. to facilitate the trip.
3. The Boards allocates up to \$50,000 from MERF unrestricted general fund (not associated with any of the charter schools it operates) to support the trip overall or to lower Magnolia student costs for participating in the trip, to be applied and utilized at the CEO's discretion. If the CEO desires to utilize a "scholarship" type process, he is directed to follow an IRS-compliant scholarship committee process.
4. To the extent that MERF employees or its agents advanced or will advance funds to support the summer trip (e.g., ticket deposits, etc.), the Board authorizes reimbursement consistent the MERF's reimbursement policy (e.g., present receipts, etc.)

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Board this 23rd day of May, 2024, by the following vote:

AYES:

NOES:

ABSTAIN:

ABSENT:

The undersigned Board Secretary does hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true, and correct copy of a resolution adopted by the said Board at its meeting on the above date and by the vote above stated, which resolution is on file in the office of MERF.

Board Secretary