



# MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board Of Directors

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Board Agenda Item #	Quarterly Report of Media Coverage from Larson Communications. In addition, social media metrics report for MPS.
Date:	May 12, 2016
To:	MPS Board of Directors
From:	Caprice Young, Ed.D., CEO & Superintendent
Staff Lead:	Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief External Officer
RE:	MPS Quarterly media report update (October-April 2016). social media metrics report

## Proposed Board Recommendation

Informational item, no action required.

Review MPS Quarterly media report for the months of Oct. 2015-April 2016. Additionally, we will review MPS social media metrics report.

## Background

MPS goal is to inform the Board about our media coverage for the months of October-April 2016. One of the underlying goals of this quarterly media report is to update the board on the vast amounts of positive and negative media coverage MPS has received over the last six months.

## Budget Implications

There are no budget implications.

## Name of Staff Originator:

Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief External Officer

## Attachments

- MPS narrative and analysis of quarterly media report for October 2015-April 2016.
- Social media metrics report



MAGNOLIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Magnolia Public Schools Communications Report January - April 2016

### Summary

During the first four months of 2016, Larson Communications (LC) worked with Magnolia Public Schools (Magnolia) to counteract the regular cadence of attacks launched by Amsterdam & Partners, while also working to proactively define Magnolia's brand. Amsterdam's campaign has been non-stop, fueled by endless sums of money and attacking the schools on all fronts. LC continues to leverage relationships with reporters to dissuade them from pursuing stories prompted by outreach from Amsterdam's p.r. representatives.

In order to proactively define Magnolia as a network of successful STEAM schools, **LC pitched and secured positive pieces in Orange County and Los Angeles media markets, including placing impactful opinion pieces**, while also working with reporters behind the scenes to provide them with information that would counteract the false claims they had received from Amsterdam's p.r. representatives. The positive stories placed focused on Magnolia students' aggregate and individual achievements, pressing school districts for charter approval and continued support. Opinion pieces by Caprice Young further drove home the narrative that Magnolia schools are high-achieving, public STEAM schools that are assets to their communities.

In both Los Angeles and Orange counties, LC worked hard to get Caprice's unique voice into print through both op-eds and quotes in larger pieces. This sets Caprice up as a thought leader, which helps to counteract the negative perceptions fueled by Amsterdam, by presenting her and Magnolia's viewpoint first. Caprice's voice came through in each piece as thoughtful and factual, giving authority and credence to Magnolia's combatting of any allegations.

Through both these op-eds and other media placements, LC continues the slow process of responding to Amsterdam's many false claims as well as the ripple effects from anti-charter critics, particularly in Orange County. LC spent a significant amount of time this quarter working with reporters on proactive stories to combat these allegations, focusing most heavily on the *Los Angeles Times*, the *San Diego Union-Tribune*, *EdSource*, and the *Orange County Register* (including an editorial board meeting). To prepare for these reporters interactions, Larson finalized fact sheets, mined for positive stories, and developed positive messaging. Additionally, Larson developed and helped to execute on a comprehensive social media strategy across multiple platforms.

Larson also coordinated efforts with the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools when they were forced to respond to questions on the Hill. LC also recommended strategies including filing a complaint with the California Department of Education in the wake of the private screening arranged by the school district in Orange County.

Overall, these proactive, positive stories continue to bolster Magnolia's brand of student STEAM achievement and success. This quarter saw a total of **32 placements**, with articles in the *Los Angeles Times*, *Los Angeles Daily News*, *LA School Report*, *KPCC FM*, *Orange County Register*, and many other outlets. A majority of these placements were positive stories either proactively defining Magnolia or counterbalancing negative allegations.

### Media Placements

Charter schools in Orange County

- [“Fear Drives Criticism of Charter Schools,”](#) *The Orange County Register*, Jan. 4, 2016.
- [“Anaheim School Board Calls for Statewide Moratorium on Charter Schools,”](#) *Alternet*, January 8, 2016.
- [“Young: Anaheim Union Needs to Live Up to Its Own Standards for Accountability,”](#) *Voice of OC*, February 1, 2016.
- [“Anaheim Union High School District’s Ongoing War against Charter Schools,”](#) *Anaheim Blog*, March 11, 2016.
- [“Letters: AUHSD’s Anti-charter Agenda,”](#) *Orange County Register*, March 16, 2016.

#### Los Angeles Unified School District

- [“School board may deny more charter requests than grant approvals at Tuesday’s meeting,”](#) *LA School Report*, February 8, 2016.
- [“Charter schools say L.A. Unified is unfairly scrutinizing their campuses,”](#) *Los Angeles Times*, February 9, 2016.
- [“Advocates say LAUSD unduly scrutinizing charter applications,”](#) *KPCC*, February 9, 2016.
- [“Charter operators say district has turned up the heat,”](#) *LA School Report*, February 9, 2016.
- [“LA Schools Reject Parent Petition – Casting Doubt on California’s ‘Parent Trigger’ Law,”](#) *The Seventy Four Million* (also printed in *LA School Report*), March 14, 2016.
- [“After Denying Parent Trigger, District Meets with School but Some Parents are Still Unhappy,”](#) *LA School Report*, March 16, 2016.
- [“Bill Would Limit Autonomy of LA Unified Inspector General Regarding Charter Schools,”](#) *EdSource*, March 30, 2016.
- [“LAUSD must do more of what works, less of what doesn’t: Caprice Young,”](#) *Los Angeles Daily News*, April 15, 2016.
  - Featured in *Education Post* and the National Alliance for Public Charter Schools’ daily email newsletters.
- [“Top 10 LA High Schools Include 4 Charters, 3 Magnets, LACES Score Best in LAUSD,”](#) *LA School Report*, April 20, 2016.

#### Fremont Charter Application

- [“Fremont Unified Considers Allowing Magnolia Science Academy to Open,”](#) *San Jose Mercury News*, January 22, 2016.
- [“Fremont School District Denies Magnolia Charter Application,”](#) *San Jose Mercury News*, January 27, 2016.
- [“Fremont School Board Denies Magnolia Science Academy Charter Permit,”](#) *San Jose Mercury News*, January 28, 2016.
- [“Application for Fremont Charter School by Magnolia Public Schools Turned Down by Fremont Unified Board,”](#) *KLIV 1590 AM*, January 28, 2016.

#### Oceanside (San Diego) Charter Petition

- [“Charter School to Resubmit Oceanside Petition,”](#) *San Diego Union-Tribune*, January 8, 2016.
- [“Controversial Charter School Eyeing Oceanside,”](#) *Voice of San Diego*, January 13, 2016.
- [“Oceanside Charter School Delayed Indefinitely,”](#) *San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 4, 2016.

#### Gulen

- [“Turkey Wants Fremont School Board to Reject Charter School,”](#) *Contra Costa Times*, January 25, 2016.
- [“Are California’s Magnolia Public Schools Connected to Controversial Cleric?”](#) *Charter Scoop California*, January 25, 2016.
- [“Probe sought of OC-based charter school system’s ties to imam labelled ‘terrorist’ by Turkish government,”](#) *OC Weekly*, February 17, 2016.
- [“Hundreds Attend Screening of Documentary Critical of Charter Schools,”](#) *Orange County Register*, March 9, 2016.
- [“Shining Light on the Charter School Industry’s Biggest Player,”](#) *Daily Kos*, April 5, 2016.
- [“Should the Gulen Network Open a Charter School on a U.S. Military Base?,”](#) *Diane Ravitch’s Blog*, April 8, 2016.

- [“The Secret Confessions Of A Closet Gulenist – OpEd,”](#) *Eurasia Review*, April 19, 2016.

#### Miscellaneous

- [“Executive Director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanics to Give Remarks at Magnolia Science Academy 8-Bell,”](#) *U.S. State Department of Education*, January 15, 2016.
- [“San Diegans Join ‘Walk Ins’ Aiming to ‘Reclaim Our Schools’,”](#) *San Diego Free Press*, February 17, 2016.
- [“California charter school industry bill attempts to eliminate only source of public oversight,”](#) *K-12 News Network’s The Wire*, April 1, 2016.
- [“Beyond Charter Schools and the Parent’s Right to Choose the Best Schools for their Child,”](#) *QueensLatino*, April 21, 2016.

#### Next Steps

LC’s strategic recommendation is for Magnolia to put out press releases that put Amsterdam and folks on the defensive. While those individual pitches may not garner media coverage, they will serve to drive the narrative, particularly for reporters who are keeping an eye on this story. Part of this strategy is to put out press releases announcing the support of elected officials while also increasingly engaging the support of parents. The plan is to amplify parents’ voices in Spanish-language media while communicating to the larger public parent representatives’ demands that the Republic of Turkey cease its campaign. We also need to be aware of the new charter petition hearings that will be coming up in the summer. Amsterdam has been doing its work in reaching the ears of those who will vote, so Magnolia needs to move forward with a well-coordinated campaign.

The rest of this spring and summer, we recommend continuing our work building on the positive momentum created through the first quarter of the year with proactive media campaigns. These stories will include stand-alone human-interest pieces, local TV coverage of student events and stories of academic accomplishment. Centered on Magnolia’s STEAM work and student competitions, LC will work to drive coverage across Magnolia’s regions and schools.

Over the next few months, LC will work with Magnolia on their rebrand (or brand refresh) and preparing for their 15<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. This includes prioritizing social media platforms, making branding more consistent and aligning stories between platforms. LC will also continue to provide strategic counsel on both internal and external communications which will further Magnolia’s ability to serve students and families.

The Amsterdam campaign does not look like it will cease anytime soon. LC has spoken to at least a dozen national and education trade reporters, but given the extent of reporting this story would entail, the response has been interested, but not urgent. *The Los Angeles Times* is the closest to doing a story—and they will—so LC continues to find news hooks to encourage them to do the article sooner rather than later. The hope is for that article to lay all the facts out there, put it in the appropriate political context, and allow us to leverage it for further coverage that would shine a spotlight on Amsterdam’s and the Turkish president’s motivations. LC believes that while it is a slow process, it will pay off.

If we continue to proactively define Magnolia on our own terms, we will build Magnolia’s brand as that of a high-performing, STEAM-focused school system preparing students for college and career. Already, the recent release of the U.S. News & World Report rankings further bolstered Magnolia’s position as having some of the best public schools in the state. However, in order to ensure that we are able to proactively tell the student success stories (winning robotics competitions, etc.), we need to work harder on follow-through to get us the information and details we need to pitch these stories. This needs to be articulated to the team as a top priority, since positive stories that show academic achievement are our most powerful tools against the opponents. They have the funds, but we have the student successes and results. LC is confident that together we can continue to mine and pitch these stories, spreading awareness of Magnolia’s brand and pave the path towards the organization serving even more students.

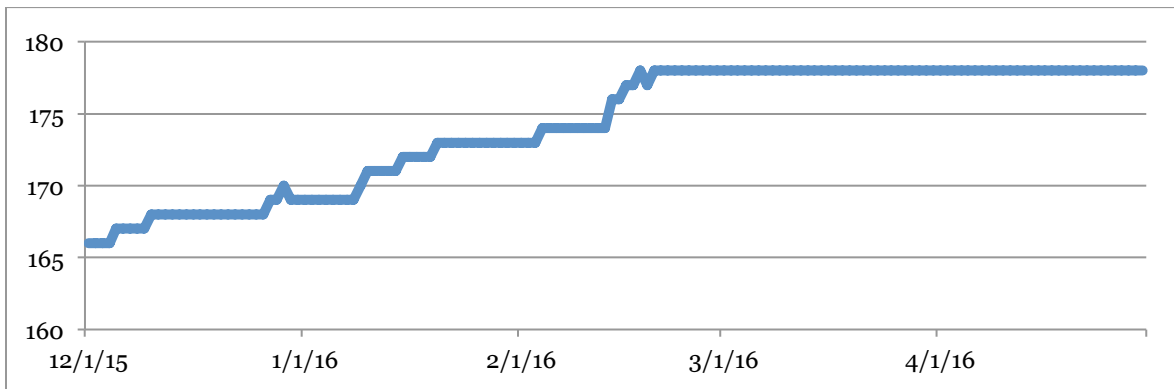


## Social Media Metrics

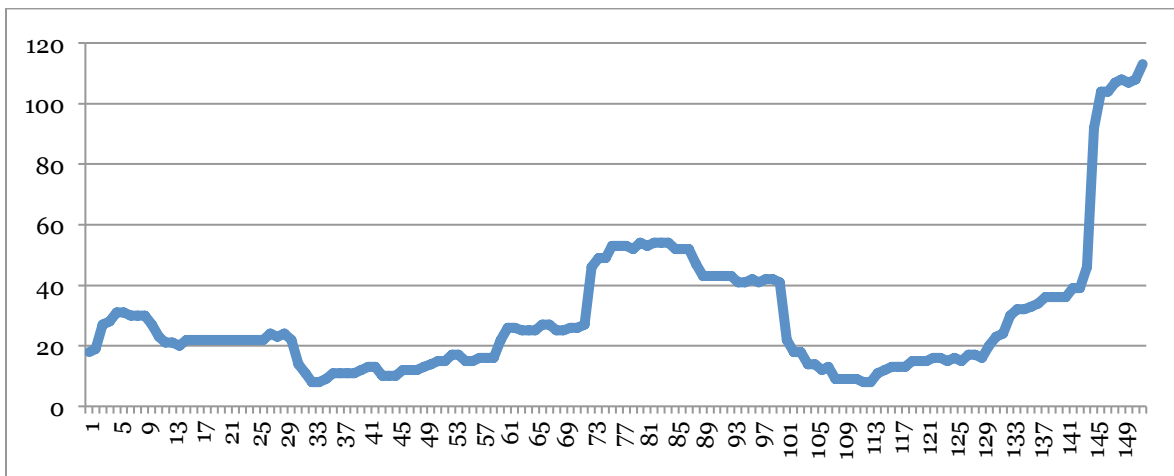
### Facebook

Over the last 180 days, Magnolia's Facebook page has seen:

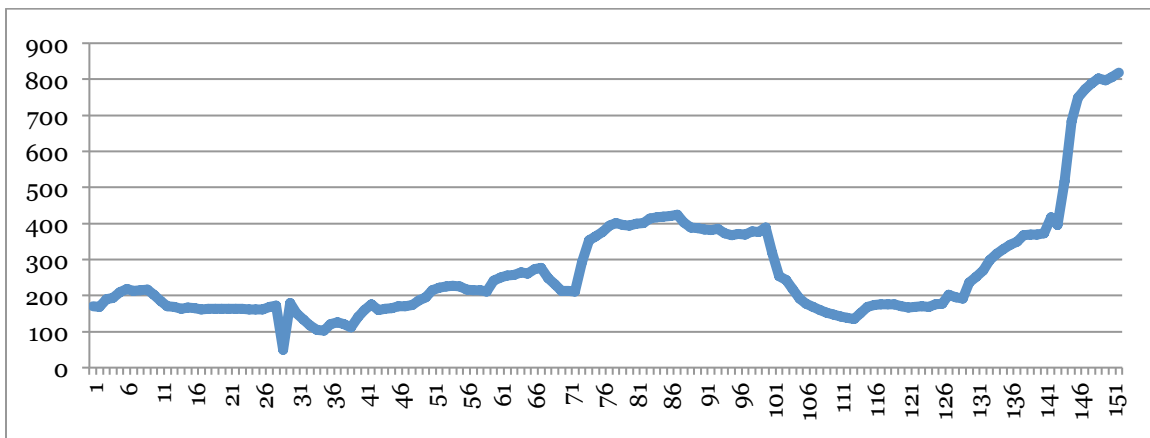
Total page fans : 178



Monthly engaged users (i.e. fans who like, comment, click on MPS' posts) : 29 users on average



Monthly total reach (i.e. number of fans who see MPS' posts): 269 users on average



### Next steps for MPS' Facebook page:

1. Focus Facebook page content on important themes that are relevant to MPS like teacher and student recruitment, STEAM education, etc.
2. Focus on putting out friendlier, more personality-showcasing posts that highlight not only the schools' new developments but also the network's values. A few examples of posts in this category can include:
  - a. School events, especially school visits from notable figures.
  - b. School projects that showcase growth and progress.
  - c. Holiday-adhering posts that showcase the network's values and personality.
3. Strike a balance between posts that appeal to the existing audiences of staff and community members *and* new audiences like existing students and alumni.
4. Create an org-wide Social Media infrastructure. We will coordinate with individual school site Social Media leads to increase the overall exposure of MPS' built-in audiences. Especially student audiences from those pages.

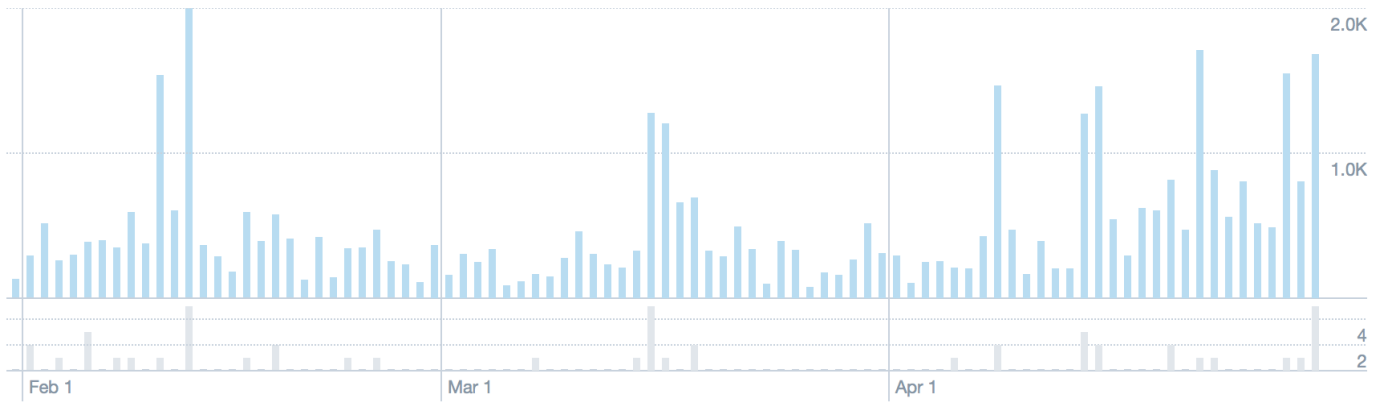
Efforts in this area can include:

- a. Identifying and managing individual school site's social media managers for better coordination of efforts.
- b. Providing training webinars on best social media best practices.
- c. Coordinating content posting schedule so individual school site's content complements the main network page and vice versa.

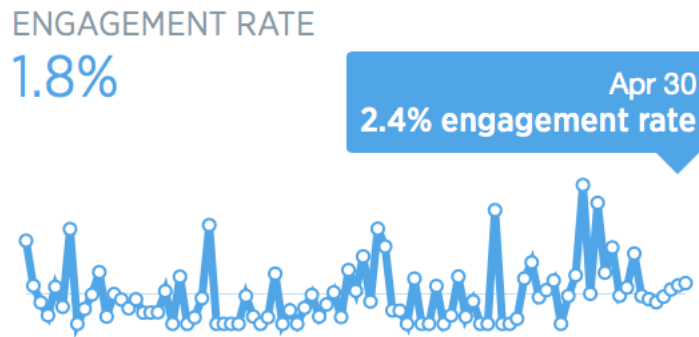
### Twitter

Over the last 91 days, MPS' Twitter account earned:

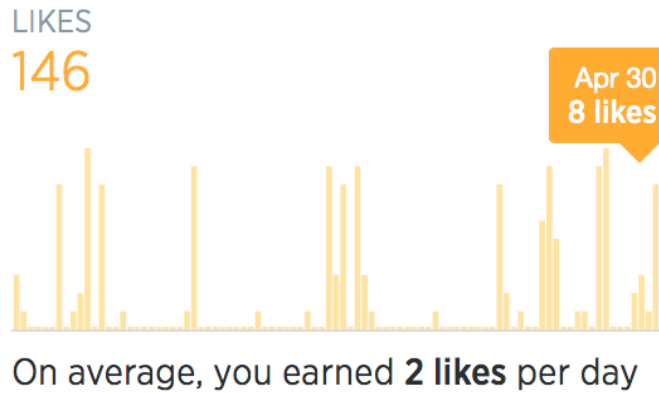
A total of 33,400 impressions:



An average engagement rate of 1.4%:



An average of 2 post likes per day:



**Next steps for MPS' Twitter page:**

Since the temperature on Twitter is hot with lots of MPS' opponents trying to spread false information, MPS' Twitter account will focus on setting up an air cover of positive developments to drown out the negative noise:

- Achievements (e.g. school data, awards).
- Magnolia wide and school specific events
- News and developments
- Posts that focus on promoting STEAM education and Arts education.