



# MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board Of Directors

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Board Meeting Date:	July 9, 2015
Board Agenda Item #	10
Staff Lead:	Caprice Young, Chief Executive Officer
Name of Staff Originator:	Barbara Torres
RE:	Quarterly Update from Larson Communications, PR

## Proposed Board Recommendation

This is an information item, no actions will be taken.

## Background

Larson Communication provides quarterly updates on their involvement and support of Magnolia Public Schools to MPS Board. Larson Communications is the Public Relations company for Magnolia and they help manage Magnolia's external and internal communications.

## Budget Implications

None

## Attachments:

Quarterly Report



MAGNOLIA  
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Magnolia Public Schools Communications Report April – June 2015

### Summary

Since April, Larson Communications (LC) has executed six successful proactive communications campaigns, generating 14 news placements, with articles in the *LA Times*, the *LA Daily News* and one broadcast television. Building on the positive momentum from the first quarter of the year, stories continue to feature Magnolia in a positive light, with stories ranging from highlighting student accomplishments to reinforcing Magnolia's financial responsibility and stability through independent sources.

LC has managed Magnolia's external and internal communications, successfully bringing to the public's attention that Magnolia is moving in a positive direction and crafting letters for different school sites to families, teachers and staff informing them of key updates. LC has worked with reporters at the *LA Times* and *LA Daily News* to explain the nuanced findings of the state auditor, prepared Magnolia staff with talking points and reached out to broadcast and print media.

LC's biggest role in the second quarter of 2015 has been to keep the positive momentum going with human-interest stories, as well as leading strategic planning with the Magnolia leadership team. As a result of these efforts, the second quarter of 2015 has seen a vastly improved ratio of positive to negative coverage. Out of 15 stories, only one was negative in tone and content, focusing on the California state auditor's findings regarding Magnolia's finances. This is a significant improvement from coverage Magnolia garnered in 2014, all of which was negative. Continuing the momentum of positive stories with a well-executed communications plan going forward and providing strategic counsel on both internal and external communications will further Magnolia's ability to serve students and families.

### Media Placements

#### **Magnolia Schools Improves Outlook**

- ["California Charter Schools Claims Win Over L.A. School District,"](#) *The Bond Buyer*, May 14, 2015.
- ["Magnolia Charter Schools Receive Improved Outlook,"](#) *The Bond Buyer*, June 22, 2015.
- ["Improved credit for Magnolia schools opens door for expansion,"](#) *LA School Report*, June 24, 2015.

#### **State Auditor Findings**

- ["LA's Magnolia charters 'grossly' underreported truancies, state auditors find,"](#) 89.3 KPCC, May 7, 2015.
- ["State audit criticizes Magnolia charters and also LA Unified,"](#) *LA School Report*, May 7, 2015.
- ["State auditor finds improvement in embattled charter school chain,"](#) *LA Times*, May 7, 2015.

## **MSA- Santa Clara**

- “[Bay Area charter schools scramble for leases in tight real estate market](#),” *Contra Costa Times*, April 9, 2015.
  - Posted in [San Jose Mercury News](#) on April 9, 2015 as well.
- “[A marathon meeting, but no magnolia lease extension](#),” *Santa Clara Weekly*, April 29, 2015.
- “[New Central Park Elementary: A Blank Canvas](#),” *Santa Clara Weekly*, May 22, 2015.

## **MSA- San Diego**

- “[Documents: School threats sparked by anonymous email](#),” *ABC 10 News*, April 7, 2015.
- “[Magnolia Science Academy Archers](#),” *Fox 5 Sports*, May 22, 2015.
- “[District’s sale of San Carlos land puts charter school in limbo](#),” *Mission Times Courier* and *La Mesa Courier*, June 19, 2015

## **Extra-Curriculars at MSA-Santa Clara**

- “[Santa Clara middle school holds medieval catapulting competition](#),” *ABC 7 News*, April 2, 2015.
- “[South Bay students tops in math contest](#),” *San Jose Mercury*, April 14, 2015.
- “[Indian American teenager Shubham Banerjee working with Microsoft to launch low cost Braille printer](#),” *American Bazaar*, May 15, 2015.

## **Next Steps**

We recommend continuing to build on these positive stories with a strategic, well-planned communications plan. Team LC has presented this plan to Magnolia leadership, and the summer will be critical for getting the mechanisms in place to execute on that plan. With weekly communications between principals and LC, we will be able to find even more interesting Magnolia success stories to highlight. The next proactive campaign is the groundbreaking for the Santa Ana school site with local elected leaders—another opportunity to show that Magnolia has changed direction and is on a path to growth and expansion. If we continue to aggressively push out positive stories that gain attention, we will build our brand as that of a high-performing, STEM-focused school system preparing students for college and career. LC is confident that together we can find and pitch these stories, spreading awareness of Magnolia’s brand and serving even more students.