



# MAGNOLIA PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Board Of Directors

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Board Agenda Item #	Community Engagement and Development Program
Date:	09-10-15
To:	Community Committee: Diane Gonzalez and Dr. Remzi Oten
From:	Caprice Young, Ed.D., CEO & Superintendent
Staff Lead:	Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief External Officer
RE:	Community Engagement and Development Program

## Proposed Board Recommendation

Informational item: Community Engagement and Development Program

### Background

MPS goal is to identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and environment. Furthermore, MPS wants to train parents to successfully participate in their son or daughter's education, including being involved in the schools' decision-making process.

### Budget Implications

No Budget implications

### Name of Staff Originator:

Alfredo Rubalcava

### Attachments

Community Engagement and Development Program plan (draft form)

### Name of Staff Originator

Alfredo Rubalcava, Chief External Officer

**To: Community Committee, Magnolia Public Schools**

Board Members: Diane Gonzalez & Dr. Remzi Oten

**From:** Alfredo Rubalcava, CXO/Magnolia Public Schools

Arnoldo S. Torres, Consultant

**RE: Community Engagement and Development Program**

**Date:** September 10, 2015

In my experience in education and with Magnolia over the last six months, I have found that there is a pervasive misconception that charter schools reflect and/or are engaged in “community organizing”. This is a concept that plays well in the minds of many who believe that charter schools are organizing working poor Latino and Black communities. While I am sure there are some examples where organizing has and is taking place in charter school communities, there are very few if any examples within the charter school community that have truly undertaken “community organizing”.

I do not doubt that some communities served by charter schools have been organized around specific issues of importance to the charter school; this tends to be a “one-way” model. In other words, it is stressed to parents that they need to support the charter school for a list of reasons, but when does a charter school support the interests of the communities where their students reside? When has the “organizing” effort not been driven by a specific issue, as opposed to putting in place an on-going policy and education effort where the charter school, parents, students and community are all viewed as being one in the same?

It is precisely this type of program that I have been discussing and developing with our CEO and outside consultant Arnoldo Torres. Magnolia has some unique individuals and circumstances that place us in a great position to pursue this objective. Attacks on the stability of charter schools will be on going, as will the socio-economic needs of students, parents and communities served by Magnolia schools. Many charter schools and the corresponding philosophy recognize the need to better link with parents and local communities. However, in many instances the efforts undertaken do not take on an institutionalized and well thought out approach and program.

We need to recognize that it is essential that “local neighborhood schools” be as responsive to the socio-economic needs of the student, families and communities they serve. It is vital to such schools that, within reasonable financial and program limitations”, a responsive community engagement and development program be established. Such a program should attempt to address the myriad of issues that impact the effective education of the students. This MUST include the responsibility and long-term benefits of educating parents and communities of their role in this

important undertaking that are not limited to the classrooms and school grounds. We should explore the services and activities each Magnolia campus can offer to parents, students and communities that have buy in from all parties.

Much work needs to be done in the realm of “charter school community organizing” and consistent with our discussions and understanding of the above we have developed the following recommendations and tasks will be incorporated into our Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP). This program should fund a significant majority of activities and objectives contained in these recommendations. It is my intent to begin implementation by July 1, 2015.

### **Assessment of Internal Capabilities and Commitment for Developing a Community Engagement and Development Plan**

It is imperative that we have a baseline of activities, capabilities and degree of commitment to undertake the following activities as part of the Magnolia Public Schools to create and operate the Magnolia Community Engagement and Development Program:

- 1.) Meet with each school site principal one-on-one and/or in small groups, to undertake a questionnaire and discussion of their previous experiences with local communities they serve, previous examples of successful community engagement, determine if they have ever had any training on developing community relations, and their views and disposition to undertaking and institutionalizing such a program at their site with parents and community.
- 2.) Apply questionnaire to all teachers at each Magnolia school to assess the same elements above, and meet with representative group of teachers from each campus to engage in discussions as to their disposition for undertaking permanent community relations program,
- 3.) Meet with most active and engaged parents, as identified by Principal at each Magnolia site, for the purpose of sharing with them the vision Magnolia has for creating an on-going community relations program, begin discussions of the expectations they would have of Magnolia, the role and responsibilities they would have as parents and members of their community, and assess their willingness to undertake a leadership role in the development of this project,
- 4.) A key element that would provide significant “upsides” for in the classroom, parents, and community at large, would be the creation of school based health clinics located on campus sites (if possible). There is little doubt that many students attending Magnolia schools and all charter and traditional public schools have social and mental health challenges stemming from home and/or the communities socio-economic condition. Having a school site on the premises or close by would provide great assistance to minimizing the disruption and interruption caused by these factors while focusing on the

prevention of these medical conditions. I have included an example of a school based clinic operation as well as the proposal we should consider in pursuing this project for Magnolia.

- 5.) We will pursue issues that focus on English learners and corresponding families to create a more comprehensive approach to assisting these students to acquire English language capability. We want to insure that this is done in a manner that insures comprehension, application and context of English language skills.

It is also essential to recognize the importance that parents have in the education of their children especially students who are English learners. We will also focus on English language instruction for parents and other family members. This will accomplish several objectives that also can stabilize immigrant families, including academic achievement, college education, employment opportunities beyond the Latino profile, and other socio-economic gains.

Consultant Arnoldo Torres will work with me, and others at Magnolia to execute these activities since this was one of the principal reasons he was asked to assist Magnolia.

### **Development of Magnolia Community Engagement and Development Program**

Once we have this information in hand we will be ready to begin developing the specific elements of the Magnolia Community Engagement and Development Program which will be institutionalized and directed by myself (Alfredo Rubalcava)

The information we collect will allow us to:

- 1.) Have reasonable bases for identifying the elements amongst administrators, teachers and parents that indicate their interest, capabilities and willingness to have their school site undertake the creation of a community engagement and development program. It will also allow us to have an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses amongst these three groups at each Magnolia site,
- 2.) Develop the Community Engagement and Development Policy for Magnolia School and the program elements that will guide all work and activity within Magnolia school sites. The overall objective of this policy and program is to develop program services that are needed for students, parents and communities to enhance the education and educational experience at Magnolia. Services could include mental, dental and primary health care, social services, parent education and organizing, and other services determined by administrators, teachers, parents and community that would strengthen the

school and community bond/relationship. Expectations for participation from all involved groups should be discussed and if possible established,

- 3.) Develop a corrective action plan designed to improve the school/parent/community dynamic at specific Magnolia school sites. It is also important to consider if key personnel with Magnolia are open to being educated and exposed to a new “relationship model” and part of a community engagement and development program. The disposition of parent and community will also be assessed and a determination made of if or how to proceed,
- 4.) Determine which Magnolia school sites should have priority for pursuing development and implementation of the community engagement program,
- 6.) Begin further and more detailed discussions with administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders to identify components of the community engagement and development program, identify roles and responsibilities and form working groups,
- 7.) Begin identifying potential sources of funding to underwrite initial stages of execution of local Magnolia school site community engagement and development programs. Programs implemented at all sites will be measured for effectiveness, responsiveness, and levels of participation from all involved groups. These measurements will be incorporated into training and improvements to strengthen program.

Arnoldo Torres will work with me, and others at Magnolia, to execute these activities and assist in developing the elements of our community engagement program.

### **Time Frames**

I envision the following time frames:

- 1.) Questionnaire and focus group discussions to take place between July 1 and September 30,
- 2.) Development of the Community Engagement and Development Policy from August 1 to October 30,
- 3.) Development of corrective action plans from October 1 to November 30,
- 4.) Identification and selection of Magnolia school sites (at least two or three in the first year) for community engagement program and begin formation of infrastructure, identification program services/components, budget development and possible funding sources November 1 to Dec. 23